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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

PRODUCED BY THE INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTION FACULTY,

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FOREWORD

This volume is designed as a training aid to be used in the Intelligence School, Office of Training. The volume also may be used as a ready reference for intelligence officers who may wish to review or reflect on the charter, organization, and some of the philosophical concepts and problems related to estimative intelligence.

Whether in the business of intelligence collection or intelligence production, most professional intelligence officers probably have had the opinion, at one time or another, that a given National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) suffered because it did not reflect the best -- if any -- use of significant information known to the critic. All except the most innocent in the intelligence community probably have heard the cliché that if NIE's were rated for "runs, hits, and errors," the percentage in the last category would be excessive.

In response to this charge, this volume presents some opinions of the estimators themselves. It is clear from such comments that those most closely associated with fashioning the ultimate intelligence product -- the National Intelligence Estimate and the Special Estimate -- probably are more conscious than any of their critics that those who risk making such estimates are "engaged in a hazardous occupation."

S-E-C-R-E-T

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
INTRODUCTION	1
THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD	1
Authority	1
Membership	2
Operations	3
THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES AND THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES	4
Authority	4
Membership	6
Operations	7
Post Mortems and Validity Studies	9
SELECTED READINGS	11
A. Intelligence and National Policy	
Robert Cutler, "Intelligence as Foundation for Policy"	12
25X1C [REDACTED]	
25X1A [REDACTED] "On Estimating Reactions"	28
B. Problems of Estimative Intelligence	
25X1A [REDACTED] "Notes on 'Capabilities' in National Intelligence"	34
25X1A [REDACTED], "Notes on Some Aspects of Intelligence Estimates"	47
25X1A [REDACTED] "Scientific Estimating"	61

S-E-C-R-E-T

PAGE
NO.

25X1A	[REDACTED] "The Role of the Consultant in Intelligence Estimates"	65
	Sherman Kent, "Words of Estimative Probability"	69

C. Coordination of Intelligence

25X1C	[REDACTED]	
	Ray Cline, "Is Intelligence Overcoordinated?"	94
	R. J. Smith, "Coordinating and Responsibility"	100
	D. Estimative Intelligence and the Cuban Crisis	
	Sherman Kent, "A Crucial Estimate Relived"	106
	Fred Greene, "The Intelligence Arm: The Cuban Missile Crisis"	121
	Roberta Wohlstetter, "Cuba and Pearl Harbor: Hindsight and Foresight"	135

APPENDIXES

	A. NSCID No. 1 (New Series), "Basic Duties and Responsibilities"	157
--	---	-----

25X1A	[REDACTED]	
	C. DCID No. 1/1 (New Series), "Production of National Intelligence Estimates"	170

25X1A	[REDACTED]	
-------	------------	--

S-E-C-R-E-T

PAGE
NO.

LIST OF CHARTS

1. Structure of the United States
Intelligence Board Follows page 3
2. Types of USIB Agenda Items, 1964 Follows page 3
3. The Board of National Estimates and
Office of National Estimates Follows page 5
4. Preparation of a National
Intelligence Estimate Follows page 7

S-E-C-R-E-T

INTRODUCTION

One authority on intelligence has written that:

"National Intelligence in the United States may be distinguished by two features:

1. It is intended to serve the formulators of national security policy.
2. Its content, transcending the exclusive competence of a single department or agency, is presented as the consensus of the intelligence community.

Since national policy is not designed to be a shifting guide to action but rather to serve as a standing precept over a considerable span of time, intelligence is needed that will afford rather long-range fore-knowledge of the capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action of foreign nations. Such intelligence is usually presented in the form of a 'strategic estimate.' When prepared at the national level as a composite of the views of the intelligence community, it is produced as a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)." *

In a crude analogy, the finishing machinery through which estimates are processed to become the "consensus of the intelligence community" is the United States Intelligence Board (USIB). The cutting, shaping, and forming machinery for handling the host of input considerations on a given problem is represented by the Board of National Estimates (BNE) and the Office of National Estimates (ONE).

THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

Authority

Statutory authority for the USIB is given in National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) No. 1 (New Series). Included among the

* Jack Zlotnick. National Intelligence (Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1964), p. 27.

S-E-C-R-E-T

other responsibilities of the USIB and/or USIB members are the following which are most pertinent to estimative intelligence: *

1. To support the Director of Central Intelligence in the production of national intelligence and concur with such intelligence, or, if not in concurrence, to provide written dissent. (Par. 4a)

2. To provide information of impending crisis situations to the Director of Central Intelligence, to other USIB members, and to the National Indications Center; and to assist in preparation and dissemination of NIE's on such crisis situations. (Par. 4e)

In addition to the authority spelled out in NSCID No. 1, each of the other NSCID's issued to date (Nos. 2-8) makes quite clear the concurrence/consultative responsibilities of the USIB vis-a-vis the Director of Central Intelligence. In terms of the production of intelligence estimates, the following paragraphs of NSCID No. 3 (New Series) are noteworthy:

National Intelligence....relating to the national security which has been produced as interdepartmental or departmental intelligence may also, when appropriate, be submitted through the U.S. Intelligence Board for issuance by the Director of Central Intelligence as provided by NSCID No. 1. (Par. 5)

Despite the above mentioned allocations of primary production responsibilities (of CIA, State, and Defense), there will be areas of common or overlapping interest which will require continuing interagency liaison and cooperation. In the event that a requirement for intelligence is established for which there is not existing production capability, the Director of Central Intelligence, in consultation with the U.S. Intelligence Board, shall determine which of the departments and agencies of the intelligence community can best undertake the primary responsibility as a service of common concern. (Par. 8)

Membership

The membership of USIB as specified in NSCID No. 1 is constituted as follows:

* For the full range of USIB responsibilities, the complete text of NSCID No. 1 is reproduced as Appendix A to this volume.

The Director of Central Intelligence, Chairman
The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Central
Intelligence Agency
The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department
of State
The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
The Director, National Security Agency
A Representative of the Atomic Energy Commission
A Representative of the Director of the Federal Bureau
of Investigation (Par. 2b)

To further guarantee that USIB decisions shall be of the "consensus"
type:

"The Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman
[of USIB] shall invite the chief of any other department
or agency having functions related to the national security
to sit with the U.S. Intelligence Board whenever matters
within the purview of his department or agency are to be
discussed." (NSCID No. 1, Par. 2b)

In addition to the statutory members and specially invited participants,
the chiefs of intelligence of the military services (Air, Army, Navy)
attend sessions of the USIB as observers.* Chart 1, "Structure of the
United States Intelligence Board," illustrates the USIB structure.**

Operations

Chart 2, "Types of USIB Agenda Items, Fy 1965," illustrates the nature
of the work load handled by the USIB during a single year.** The chart
makes obvious the importance of estimates and estimate-related items in
the continuing work of the USIB. Moreover, a considerable number of both
the COMOR ***

25X1A

* Prior to March 1964 when the Director of DIA was named to
be a USIB member the military intelligence chiefs were USIB repre-
sentatives.

** Charts 1 and 2 follow page 3.

*** COMOR has since been replaced by COMIREX, Committee on Imagery
Requirements and Exploitation. (DCID No. 1/13)

- 3 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

25X1C In addition to the discussions which take place at the formal meetings of the USIB representatives as reflected in Chart 2, the USIB members will have had informal discussions of terms of reference, substantive questions, or specific problems with representatives of the Board of National Estimates, with members of the ONE Staff, or with participants on one or more of the 14 official USIB committees. The USIB committees, committee chairmen, and committee vice-chairmen or secretaries (as of 1 March 1967) are identified in Appendix B in relation to the CIA component with which they are most closely associated. All of the USIB committees with the exception of the National Intelligence Survey Committee are authorized by specific DCID's, and the NIS Committee follows from implementation of National Intelligence Survey Standard Instructions of December 1948 which were developed in implementation of NSCID No. 3. Although all but two of the Committees currently are chaired by a CIA representative, the DCID's make such chairmanships mandatory only in the cases of the Economic Intelligence [REDACTED] and almost mandatory for the Interagency Clandestine Collection Priorities Committee -- the chairman of the last group "will normally be a senior official of the (CIA) Clandestine Services."

The USIB Committees on Economics, Science, Guided Missiles and Astronautics, and Joint Atomic Energy are directly involved in the preparation of estimative intelligence; but at least five other Committees whose responsibilities lie principally in areas of collection and indications should be and are necessarily involved with the estimators in order to make the best possible judgments on any given situation.* Before estimates are submitted for the formal USIB seal of approval as National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) or Special National Intelligence Estimates (SNIE's), however, there will have been a series of coordinations within the Office of National Estimates and the Board of National Estimates.**

THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES AND THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

Authority

Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) No. 1/1 (New Series) ***

* These five Committees are COMOR (now COMIREX), SIGINT, Critical Collection Problems, Interagency Clandestine Collection Priorities, and the Watch Committee.

** Additional comments on the coordination process follow in the next section of this report on the BNE and ONE.

*** Effective 5 Aug 59. A copy is attached as Appendix C to this report.

Chart

PRESIDENT

- NSC**
- FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD**
- HEADS OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES** (8)
- SECRETARY OF STATE**
- SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**
- DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE (Chairman of USIB)** (1)
- ATTORNEY GENERAL**
- CHAIRMAN AEC**
- FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE DIVISIONS** (8)
- DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH** (3)
- CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**
- DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**
- AEC REPRESENTATIVE ON USIB** (6)
- DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CIA** (2)
- REPRESENTATIVE OF DIRECTOR OF FBI** (7)
- USIB**
 - 1. DIRECTOR OF CIA (CHM)
 - 2. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CIA (CIA REPRESENTATIVE)
 - 3. DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH (STATE)
 - 4. DIRECTOR OF DIA
 - 5. DIRECTOR OF NSA
 - 6. AEC REPRESENTATIVE
 - 7. FBI REPRESENTATIVE
 - 8. OTHERS AS REQUESTED
- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**
 - JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**
 - DIRECTOR, NAT'L SECURITY AGENCY** (5)
 - DIRECTOR DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY** (4)
- DEPARTMENT OF ARMY**
- DEPARTMENT OF NAVY**
- DEPARTMENT OF AIR FORCE**
- ASS'T CHIEF OF STAFF - INTELLIGENCE** (Army)
- ASS'T CHIEF NAVAL OPERATIONS- INTELLIGENCE** (Navy)
- ASS'T CHIEF OF STAFF - INTELLIGENCE** (Air Force)

USIB member (white box)

USIB observer (shaded box)

identifies the Board of National Estimates by that title. The referenced DCID, other DCID's the NSCID's and CIA regulations which establish the procedures for the production of national estimates fail, however, to specify the manner of selection, the number of members, or the duration of terms of members of the BNE. In practice, the members of the BNE are selected by the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with the Director of the Office of National Estimates who, as noted in Chart 3*, also is Chairman of the BNE. Membership on the BNE generally has been limited to 12-15 individuals. Because of some confusion in past years regarding the relationship of BNE and ONE in the Agency's organizational structure, an official notice, issued early in 1966, clarified the situation. The notice read as follows:

1. Effective immediately, the Board and Office of National Estimates are established as a component reporting directly to the Director of Central Intelligence.

2. The Board of National Estimates continues as the Director's instrument for the production of National Intelligence Estimates, and the Director of National Estimates will continue to be Chairman of the Board. The Chairman and the Board will report directly to the Director on substantive estimative matters. The Director of National Estimates will maintain close and substantive consultation with the Deputy Director for Intelligence, who will continue to serve as advisor to the Director regarding the substance of all finished intelligence. The Deputy Director for Intelligence will continue to ensure substantive and analytical support for the work of the Board of National Estimates.

3. The members of the Office of National Estimates will continue to be members of the Intelligence Career Service. The Deputy Director for Intelligence, in consultation with the Director of the Office of National Estimates, will be responsible for meeting the staffing needs of the Office of National Estimates. *

Mission

The principal tasks of the Board of National Estimates -- however it is chosen -- are defined as follows:

* Chart 3 follows page 5.

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* [REDACTED] 20 Jan 66 (S).

- 5 -

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1. To present for USIB approval, on at least a quarterly basis, a program of NIE's and SNIE's for production during the forthcoming six months.

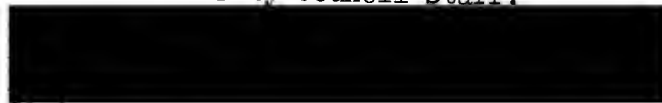
2. To develop and circulate terms of reference for all NIE's and SNIE's; to prepare the drafts of given NIE's and SNIE's; to discuss draft estimates with representatives of USIB agencies and make such revisions as necessary; and to submit final drafts of national estimates to the USIB for approval.
(DCID No. 1/1, New Series effective 5 Aug 59, Pars. 1-3)

3. In addition to the specification of his duty as Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, the Director of the Office of National Estimates also is charged with:

- a. Directing the production of NIE's, including the setting of priorities and assignment of production responsibilities among components of the CIA and among the intelligence agencies of the government.
- b. Preparing national intelligence estimates for issuance by the Director of Central Intelligence.
- c. Providing CIA representation and intelligence support at the Staff Assistants level of the National Security Council Staff.

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d.



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- e. Giving appropriate guidance to both the intelligence collecting and intelligence research agencies. [redacted] revised 16 Aug 63)

Membership

Except for the DCI, the members of the Board of National Estimates bear the heaviest burden within the intelligence community for the adequacy and accuracy of estimates which are most likely to be of importance to the formulation of the foreign policies of the U.S. government. Since 1950, there have been fewer than 50 individuals who have served or are serving as members of the BNE. Almost without exception, the BNE members have been involved in public service types of activities -- civilians in government, career military officers,

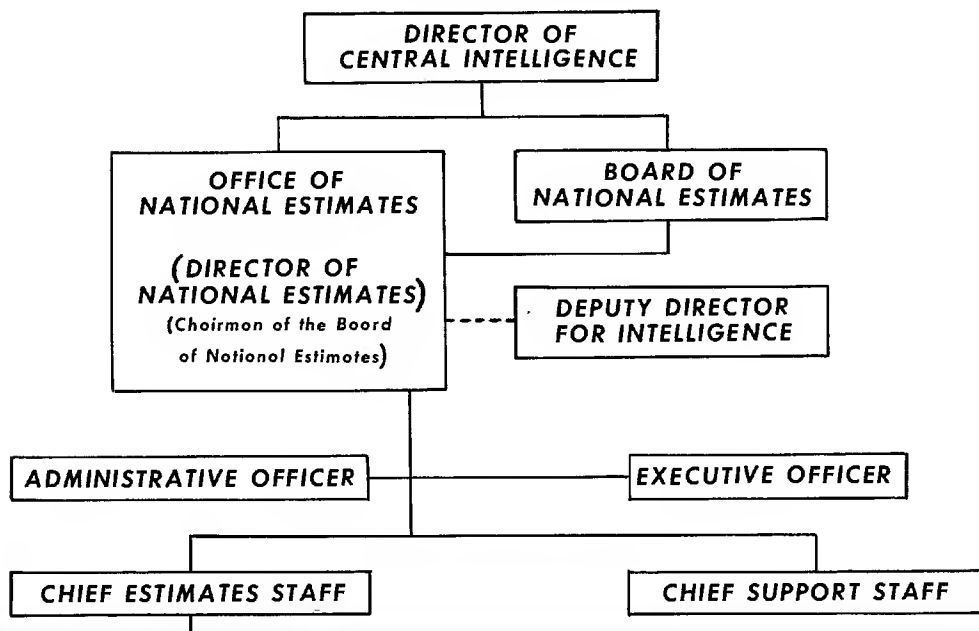
- 6 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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Chart 3

THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES & THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



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and academicians. They are articulate and have both the ability and willingness to deal with a broad range of highly complex problems -- including some highly technical ones. Unlike their contemporaries in other agencies of government, in business, or in academic research, BNE members frequently are forced to make critical estimates on the most fragmentary data base.

The membership of the present BNE reflects a high degree of formal training in the fields of history and political science and long experience in the intelligence community. Three of the present Board members are career military officers of flag rank and another is a former ambassador. Whether because of the speculative nature of intelligence estimating or for other reasons, there has never been a top-level scientist on the BNE. *

Operations

Chart 4, "Preparation of a National Estimate," ** illustrates how the burden of producing an NIE or an SNIE falls on the BNE and on the Estimates Staff of ONE. For each estimate -- recently the production of NIE's and SNIE's has averaged 50-60 per year -- the BNE/ONE will draw up, in consultation with the USIB representatives, the terms of reference, the assignment of responsibilities among USIB members for contributions, and the deadlines for submission of contributions on given estimates. *** Even though a particular agency may formally be assigned the task of responding only to a very specific part of the problem being studied, such assignments are not mutually exclusive -- each USIB member is free to make submissions on any or all parts of a national estimate, regardless of the areas of his charter responsibilities. (Obviously, this has made and probably will continue to make for some confusion in those areas of overlapping responsibilities -- e.g. both State and CIA have competence on economic development in non-Communist nations and both DIA and CIA have an interest in military developments in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.)

* The problem created by this omission is discussed in some detail (see selected readings in this volume) in [REDACTED] article, "Scientific Estimating," Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer 1965. Mr. [REDACTED] is currently a member of the BNE.

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** Chart 4 follows page 7.



S-E-C-R-E-T

In any event, responses from the USIB members to estimative problems will be forwarded to one of the seven ONE Staffs (see Chart 3) for use in preparing a draft estimate. For each estimate, a BNE member is assigned responsibility as Chariman; and when the particular estimate is to be discussed by the BNE, this member chairs the session with his peers. Once agreed on by the BNE, the estimate is discussed informally with the USIB representatives and such revisions as necessary are made. The estimate is then formally submitted for USIB review and approval. Following concurrence by the USIB, the NIE or SNIE is forwarded to the National Security Council and/or such other consumers as determined by the Director of Central Intelligence.

The foregoing represents an oversimplification of the production of a national estimate and gives no hint of the stresses attendant upon a process which necessitates such continuous coordination -- a subject of great controversy in any discussion of the estimative process. To emphasize this coordination activity -- sometimes likened to the spinning of wheels -- a circular pattern has been indicated in Chart 4 between USIB and BNE, between BNE and ONE Staff, and between ONE Staff and Intelligence Producers. Although the details are never specified, corridor gossip has it that the efforts to achieve "in house" coordination between the ONE Staff and the BNE sometimes impose a severe strain on tempers. Similarly there are suggestions that the occasional footnote which is "taken" in a final NIE or SNIE represents only the surface ripple of the tempests buffetting BNE-USIB or USIB itself as coordination and/or consensus are achieved. Some credence might be given this view on the basis of a USIB memorandum in the late autumn of 1965 which stated, among other things, that the following procedures would be followed with reference to all NIE's and SNIE's:

1. The DCI will personally sign the original front cover of each NIE or SNIE.
2. The list on the inside front cover showing the actions taken by the other USIB Members will include, in addition to the title as presently shown, the name of each USIB Member or the Representative who acted for him.
3. Each dissenting footnote or statement in the estimate will correspondingly show the name, as well as title, of the USIB Member of Intelligence Chief of a Military Department. *

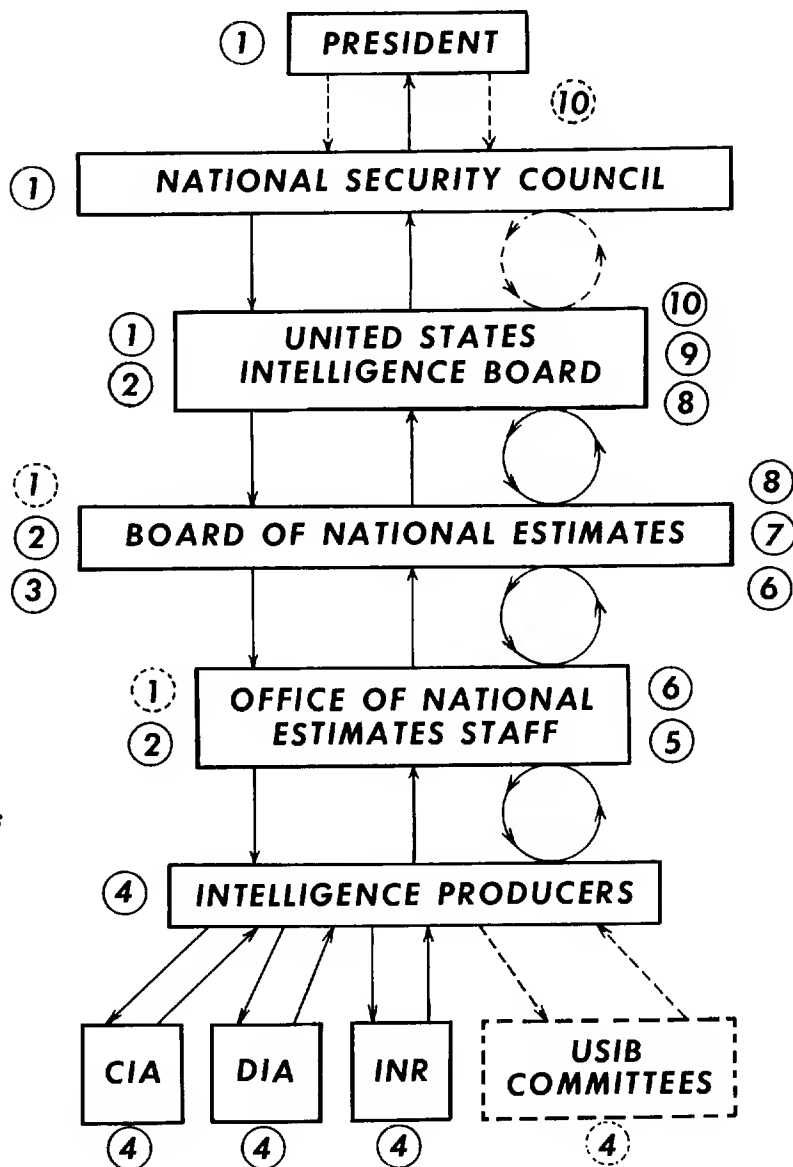
* It should be remembered that although the Chiefs of the military intelligence services are only observers insofar as final approval of a USIB estimate is concerned, they are free to enter dissenting footnotes or explanatory statements in footnotes.

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Chart 4

PREPARATION OF A NATIONAL ESTIMATE

1. Formulation of problem
2. Terms of reference
3. Assignment of responsibility
4. Preparation and submission of individual contributions
5. Preparation of preliminary draft
6. Discussion of preliminary draft
7. Approval of draft by Board of National Estimates
8. Informal discussion of BNE draft
9. Concurrence on final BNE draft (or dissent)
10. Transmittal



major responsibility

minor responsibility

Revision and
Review;
discussion
and debate

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4. The Executive Secretary, USIB, will sign the front cover as authentication.

(USIB-D-13.1/30, 18 Nov 65)

Whether obtained with or without blood, sweat, and tears, the NIE represents the intelligence community's best judgment of given conditions at a given time; and there is little question of its increasingly important role in the policy planning councils of the U.S. government. Additionally, there appears to be a growing flow of memorandums from ONE so that questions of qualifications, interpretations, emphasis on given NIE's, or suggestions regarding the need for additional NIE's can be brought to the attention of policy makers or to representatives of other government agencies. Whether dissenting views of an individual BNE or ONE member have ever been, or could be, more important than an approved NIE in affecting decisions on national policy on a particular problem is a question beyond the scope of this training aid or competence of this office -- such a study could be prepared only by someone who had been closely associated with estimative intelligence over a long period.

Post Mortems and Validity Studies

At the time an NIE is submitted for approval of the USIB representatives, or at any time shortly following such approval, a Post Mortem (PM) may be prepared on the report. The purpose of such PM's is to spell out the problems, particularly the gaps in intelligence, which were revealed in the course of preparing an NIE. There is no regulation requiring that a PM be prepared, and the PM may be initiated by the contributors to the NIE, by ONE Staff members who worked on the estimate, by BNE members, or by the USIB representatives. At a recent meeting of the USIB, the representatives agreed that in the future:

"In presenting each post-mortem to USIB, the Board of National Estimates (BNE) in coordination with the USIB representatives, should include a recommendation that USIB member agencies be requested to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to overcome the deficiencies noted in the post-mortem. If the deficiencies are considered critical and of sufficient priority, an additional recommendation should be included to refer the post-mortem to the CCPC / Critical Collection Problems Committee/ for analysis and recommendations as to appropriate actions deemed necessary to overcome the cited deficiencies." *

* USIB-M-399, 26 Aug 65, "Draft Minutes of the 26 Aug 65 Intelligence Board Meeting." (S)

PM's are prepared on roughly 10 per cent of the NIE's published during any given year.

The Validity Study gives the estimators an opportunity to look backward to determine the "accuracy" of an estimate or series of estimates. For all practical purposes, the Validity Study as a formal tool has largely disappeared. Requirements for evaluation of current estimates are probably best met by memorandums or discussions among principals; and, over time, there would seem to be no useful purpose served by dredging up points wherein old estimates would be labeled as accurate or inaccurate. More to the point, for example, is the informal re-examination of a controversial estimate in the manner of Sherman Kent's review of the Cuban missile situation in Studies in Intelligence.*

* "A Crucial Estimate Relived," Studies in Intelligence Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 1964. This item is reproduced in this training aid beginning on p. 106.

SELECTED READINGS

The readings which follow represent the thinking of various individuals who, with the exceptions of Professor Greene of Williams College and Mrs. Wohlstetter of RAND Corporation, have played or continue to play important roles in the business of national estimates. To indicate that the relationship of intelligence to the formulation of national policy and the problem of coordination of intelligence estimates are not problems

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- 11 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

A. INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL POLICY

INTELLIGENCE AS FOUNDATION FOR POLICY *

Robert Cutler

An integral and in fact basic element in the formation of national security policy is the latest and best intelligence bearing on the substance of the policy to be determined. That statement is not a theoretical truism, but a description of what has by and large actually been practiced in the Executive Branch under the administration of President Eisenhower. It is based on first-hand observation: for periods totaling almost four years I was in continuous touch with the procedures for formulating, adopting, and coordinating the execution of national security policies within the Executive Branch. I assisted the President at 179 meetings of the National Security Council -- almost half of all the meetings it held in the first dozen years of its existence. I presided at 504 meetings of the Council's Planning Board (earlier called its Senior Staff). I was a member and for a while Vice Chairman of its Operations Coordinating Board; I participated in meetings of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy; I represented the President on a small group which considered special operations. It is from this experience that the conclusions of this article are drawn.¹

NSC Operating Procedures

The function of the National Security Council, as defined by National Security Act, is "to advise the President with respect to the integration

¹In 1951, in the early organizational stages of the Psychological Strategy Board, the author served as its Deputy Director and representative at meetings of the NSC Senior Staff, later to become the Planning Board. In early 1953 President Eisenhower asked him to study the organization and functioning of the NSC mechanism and make recommendations to strengthen and vitalize its structure and operating procedures. He then became the President's principal assistant with reference to the operations of the Council. He was moved from the position of Administrative Assistant (January-March 1953) to that of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, where he served from March 1953 to April 1955 and from January 1957 to July 1958.

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1959, pp. 59-71.

of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security, so as to enable the military services and other departments and agencies of Government to cooperate more effectively in matters affecting the national security." The Act also gives to the Council the duty of "assessing and appraising the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power." The Council advises the President both on policy and on plans for its execution, but its primary statutory function thus lies in the formation of policy. The role of the Council as a planning body is subordinate to its policy function.

The Council and its subsidiary Planning Board² and Operations Coordinating Board³ constitute an apparatus available to the President to help him reach policy decisions on national security. The National Security Act is sufficiently flexible to allow each President to use this personal aid as best suits his convenience. One President may use the Council mechanism in one way, another in another. The best is made of it when a President uses it in a way that satisfies his personal requirements. It has never been felt necessary to test whether the Congress can constitutionally require by statute that a President consult with specified persons or follow specified procedures in coming to a policy decision in this field.

Under President Eisenhower, the normal procedure for operating the policy-making aspects of the NSC mechanism has involved three main steps. First, the NSC Planning Board formulates recommendations as to national security policy and circulates them to Council members

²The NSC Planning Board, chaired by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, is composed of officials of the departments and agencies which are represented at the Council table with reference to a policy matter there under consideration. These officials have a rank equivalent to Assistant Secretary or higher. Each is supported by a departmental or agency staff. Each has direct access to his department or agency chief and commands all the resources of his department or agency for the performance of his duties.

³The NSC Operations Coordinating Board, of which the President's Special Assistant for Security Operations Coordination is Vice Chairman, is composed of officials of the departments and agencies concerned with the policies referred to the Board by the President for assistance in the coordination of planning. These officials have a rank equivalent to Under Secretary or higher. Each is supported by a small departmental or agency staff. Each has direct access to his department or agency chief and commands all the resources of his department or agency for the performance of his duties.

and advisers well in advance of the Council meeting at which they are scheduled to be considered. Then the Council considers and approves or modifies or rejects these recommendations, and submits to the President such as it approves or modifies. Finally, the President approves, modifies, or rejects the Council's recommendations, transmits those policies which he approves to the departments and agencies responsible for planning their execution, and -- as a rule where international affairs are concerned -- requests the NSC Operations Coordinating Board to assist these departments and agencies in coordinating their respective planning for action under the approved policies.

Thus a policy is first determined by the President, and then the departments and agencies plan how to carry out their responsibilities to the President under it, being assisted in the coordination of this planning by the OCB. It is, of course, fundamental that the planning to execute policy responsibilities be carried out by the respective departments and agencies which are directly charged by the President with such responsibilities. No person or body should intervene, at a lower level, between the President and the department head directly responsible to him.

During the period 1953-1958, with which I am familiar, the great bulk of national security policy determinations were made by the President through the operations of the NSC mechanism just described. Because this method of policy formulation was the usual one, such policies were commonly but erroneously referred to as "NSC policies." Since it is the function of the President to determine policy in all areas under his executive control and responsibility, and national security may be formed in any way which he finds convenient and appropriate, the policies so formed, whatever body or individual may submit the recommendations therefor, are the President's policies.

There were occasions during this period when national security policy was determined by the President as a result of Cabinet deliberations (though this was a rare occurrence) or by his executive decision based on conferences with one or more of his principal department or agency heads, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or others within whose special competence some particular subject would naturally fall. There should always be complete flexibility for every President to determine however he elects the matters of high policy which it is his responsibility to decide. Because of the utility and convenience of the NSC mechanism, however, and because the present Chief Executive values the advantages of integrated recommendations and joint deliberations based on them, it has been the more or less standard operating procedure during his tenure to seek to form national security policies through the procedures outlined above.

Factual Intelligence and Estimates

In this article the term "intelligence" is used to embrace both factual intelligence and estimates based thereon. In forming national security

policy both are of prime importance.

The gathering of intelligence facts is today a matter of enormous scope and hardly conceivable complexity, bearing no resemblance to the simple if hazardous personal mission of a Mata Hari. There are, indeed, many individuals working in the field of intelligence, in and out of formal government service, who must exhibit personal bravery and rare ingenuity, taking risks beyond the ordinary call of duty. Because all is grist that comes to the intelligence mill, one need not seek to measure the results of these individual efforts against the results of the world-wide scientific and technological operations employed in modern intelligence gathering.

In our continuing confrontation by a power openly dedicated to swallowing all mankind in the maw of Communism, the rapid gathering of germane intelligence on the activities of other nations in every field of endeavor has put the United States into an electronic business that is world-wide, highly scientific, incredibly complicated, and extremely expensive. It is staggering to realize the limitless ramifications of current technological procedures, the almost overwhelming amount of raw material that comes flooding in every hour of the day and night to be sifted, analyzed, codified, and -- most urgent of all -- communicated clearly to the decision-makers. For in the last analysis the valid use of intelligence is to build intellectual platforms upon which decisions can be made. It is not gathered to be stored away like a harvest. It must be delivered, succinct and unequivocal, within the shortest time feasible to focal points of use.

This prompt delivery is essential both to those who conduct our foreign affairs or direct our defensive military mechanisms and to those who frame our decisions of high policy. The sound concept that the national intelligence effort should be centralized is not inconsistent with a demonstrable need that each of the several departments have its own intelligence arm. The man who may have to dispatch a SAC bomber, an ICBM, a Polaris submarine, or a Pentomic task force has a dual function with regard to intelligence: he has a part in acquiring the latest intelligence for use at central headquarters, all the way up to the President; he also must himself have and use the latest intelligence in carrying out his crucial responsibilities.

It is for these reasons that the National Security Act in 1947 created a Central Intelligence Agency and a Director of Central Intelligence, who at one and the same time is chief officer of the Central Intelligence Agency, Chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, and Foreign Intelligence Adviser to the President and National Security Council. Through the series of NSC Intelligence Directives the President has sought to make the gathering and dissemination of intelligence more rapid and efficient. These Directives put emphasis on the centralization of authority and responsibility in the intelligence field, on making the separate intelligence organizations of the armed services and other

departments and agencies contributory to, and not independent of, such central authority, while still allowing them to meet their specialized needs.

The President has shown a constant awareness of the urgency of perfecting the national intelligence effort. He gave close attention to the reports on this effort made by the committee under General James A. Doolittle (October 1954) and by the Hoover Commission's Task Force on Intelligence Activities under General Mark Clark (May 1955). In February 1956 he formally established a President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, first chaired by Dr. James R. Killian and now by General John E. Hull. He gave this Board the continuing mission of reviewing the conduct of our foreign intelligence activities and reporting thereon periodically to the Chief Executive.

The operation of the many intelligence arms in the critical field of intelligence gathering and dissemination at all levels involves a truly vast annual expenditure. But in terms of national survival, the prompt delivery of correct intelligence to the President, the ultimate decision-maker, is an undebatable necessity.

Beyond this requirement for current factual intelligence there is an additional requirement for intelligence estimates. These estimates may be addressed to a particular country, area, situation, armament, or function and set forth both the pertinent facts and the likely future actions predicable thereon, or they may seek to arrange logically and with precision the broadest spectrum of intelligence materials into a considered appraisal of what over-all developments may be in future time.

Both types of intelligence estimates can be of the greatest possible help to policy-makers and planners. Their preparation requires expert competence and their coordination calls for objective thinking by those who have the authority to agree or differ on behalf of their organizations. Because of the prophetic nature of any estimate, it is of great consequence that the final text should seek not compromise but clarity. Many of the coordinated national intelligence estimates with which I worked during these four years clearly and fully set forth dissenting views held by competent members of the U.S. Intelligence Board.

Intelligence Orientation For the Makers of High Policy

The prompt circulation of daily bulletins and special and national estimates as basic orientation for those who make the recommendations and decisions on high policy is an obvious necessity. The Planning Board, responsible for doing the spade-work in forming policy, needs to review the special and national estimates in detail, dissecting them and arguing over them until they become familiar material. And Security Council members need to get them in time to study and weigh

them before the subjects to which they relate are taken up at the Council level. Both Planning Board and Council members should be inseminated with their contents, [REDACTED]

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In the Planning Board this insemination has been a feature of its standard operating procedure since 1953, as I will illustrate in a moment. At the Council level the education of the members is carried on in several ways.

In the NSC. The Council members receive daily, weekly, special, and general intelligence publications, and their function requires that they be familiar with this material. In 1953, moreover, in order to insure that Council members are kept fully acquainted with current intelligence, an innovation was introduced at their meetings. Until then, the oral briefing on current intelligence was given each day in the President's office to him alone. Now it became a part of the Council's established procedure to make the first agenda item at each meeting a briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence.

This oral briefing, assisted by the visual presentation of maps and charts on easels behind the Director's seat, reviews the latest important intelligence throughout the world but focuses on the areas which are to be taken up later in the meeting. It normally consumes from fifteen to twenty-five per cent of the meeting time, being frequently interrupted by specific questions from the President and other Council members. These questions often give rise to colloquies and extemporaneous expressions of views which are of consequence to the policy recommendations that are to be discussed. I have always believed this direct confrontation of the Council each week with current and special intelligence to be an important aid to policy consideration and formulation. Yet the British Cabinet and the War Cabinet under Sir Winston Churchill, to the best of my knowledge, carried on their policy deliberations without the benefit of this stimulating and thought-focussing device.

There are other ways in which the Council, as the supervisory body to which the Director of Central Intelligence reports, is kept informed about intelligence problems. The Director submits annually to the Council a summation of the problems that have faced the intelligence community in the preceding period and the measures and means adopted for dealing with them. The President and Council must also from time to time review and revise the National Security Council Intelligence Directives, which constitute the charter for the operations of the intelligence community.

The revision of one of these detailed and often complicated NSCID's, especially in relation to the functional gathering and rapid dissemination of intelligence, may require months of prior study by a panel of specialists -- perhaps scientists, technologists, or communications experts, persons of the highest intellectual and scientific standing -- brought together

- 17 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

to advise on methods and procedures. Many of the panel studies necessary for the purposes of the experts involve most carefully guarded secrets. Yet it is important that the Council understand, in general terms, how the vast intelligence community of modern days is organized, administered, and operated. The principles which emerge from the findings and recommendations of these highly classified studies are matters for action by the Council, and especially by the President.

In times of particular crisis the function of intelligence is conspicuous in its importance. In such historical crises as Indo-China in 1954, the Chinese off-shore islands in 1954-1955, and Lebanon in 1958 -- to cite a few at random -- the intelligence appraisal of the Director of Central Intelligence, the foreign policy appraisal by the Secretary of State, and the military appraisal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff were indispensable ingredients in the deliberations held before the die was cast and the policy set by the President.

In the Planning Board. The Planning Board necessarily probes deeply into the latest intelligence on each subject that comes before it. A CIA Deputy Director is in regular attendance at the Board table, bringing to its deliberations an informed knowledge of the contents of special and general intelligence estimates. He participates from his point of view in the debate on current matters, and it would be as unthinkable to overlook his views as to overlook those of the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is seated at the table as adviser on military issues.

The CIA Deputy Director and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs seek to coordinate the preparation of intelligence estimates with the forward agenda of the Planning Board. To that end the agenda is tentatively scheduled for a period of two months or more ahead so that the flow of intelligence materials can be arranged to meet the policy-makers' demands. Of course, history sometimes takes a hand, and the scheduled forward agenda has to be suspended for the immediate consideration of a special estimate that has been urgently called for. There can be nothing static or cut-and-dried in scheduling ahead the Planning Board's work-load (and consequently the Council's forward agenda); it is entirely unpredictable how long a time may be consumed in the preparation of particular policy recommendations or what interruptions may be forced by extrinsic happenings. Whatever the order of business, however, one factor is essential: a foundation of the latest and best intelligence to build upon and a constant rechecking of intelligence material as time marches on to the Council deliberation and the Presidential decision.

In the OCB. Turning for a moment from policy formulation to the coordination of plans for carrying out approved policy, we find that in this work of the Operations Coordinating Board current intelligence is again a necessary ingredient. At the weekly meetings of the OCB over

which the Under Secretary of State presides, there are in regular attendance senior representatives of Defense, Treasury, Budget, USIA, AEC, and ICA, and the two cognizant Special Assistants to the President. At the informal Wednesday luncheon which always precedes the OCB meeting the Director of Central Intelligence has an opportunity to thrash out problems of a sensitive nature. At the more formal Board meetings which follow he is a full participant. The coordination of planning in the responsible departments and agencies for the execution of a policy which the President has approved requires the same up-to-the-minute intelligence that the making of the policy did.

The Annual Policy Review. The annual Estimate of the World Situation produced by USIB member agencies is awaited each year with the greatest interest -- and anxiety -- by those in the policy-making apparatus. It is an invaluable production, presenting as it does a distillation of the painstaking efforts of the entire community to state as of the year-end the dimensions of the foreign threat to our national security. It is written with scrupulous care, it is well documented, and it sets forth with clear distinction, where differences of opinion occur, the opposing views of the experts who cannot agree with the majority estimate. I conceive this annual basic estimate to be of great consequence -- as a stimulant, as a guide, as a frank expression of differing views on matters which may be of highest significance. It is this estimate which constitutes each spring the point of departure for the recurring review of our basic national security policy.

The first step in this review is to schedule the Estimate of the World Situation for discussion at two or three meetings of the NSC Planning Board. At these meetings it is subjected to 7 to 10 hours of controversial discussion in a search for better understanding. Its contents are analyzed and dissected so that attention can be focussed upon its most important conclusions. In some years distinguished consultants from "outside of government," such men as General Gruenther, John J. McCloy, Arthur W. Burns, Karl R. Bendetsen, and Robert R. Bowie, have been invited to these Planning Board meetings. They have been asked, after study and review of the high points in the Estimate, to discuss them with the Planning Board at a meeting of several hours' duration. Then these points, together with the consultants' and the Planning Board's reaction to them, have been brought before the National Security Council at several meetings wholly devoted to their consideration. Short papers presenting the policy issues and their implications are prepared by the Planning Board as a basis for Council discussion at these meetings.

The purpose of the procedure just described is not, of course, to try at the Planning Board or Council level to change or modify any part of the annual Estimate. The purpose is to sharpen understanding of the important aspects of the Estimate and to study and discuss in open meeting the policy implications thereof. Through this procedure the Council members become sharply aware of the high points in the

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Estimate and the differences in view regarding them, and can join in a give-and-take discussion without feeling bound by the more formal presentation of carefully prepared recommendations. Almost as important as the ultimate policy decision itself is the intellectual controversy which precedes it, the educative and consolidating effort of full and frank discussion, the exposure of views which have not become fully formed in departmental exercise, the emergence of novel and interesting ideas at the highest level.

The way in which this product of the intelligence community serves as a regular precursor to the Planning Board's annual review of basic policy is a cogent illustration of the community's essential role in the shaping of national security decisions.

A Model Case

It may be appropriate, at the close, to describe what in my view is the ideal procedure for formulating a national security policy. Let us take as an example not the annual broad policy review which may consume several months, but a national policy on the State of Ruritania.

First, the Ruritania item is scheduled far ahead on the Planning Board agenda, with three to five or more sessions devoted to it. At the first of these sessions the Board will have before it a national intelligence estimate on Ruritania. It will also have before it a factual and analytical statement, prepared by the responsible department or departments or by an interdepartmental committee, on the military, economic, political, and other germane aspects of the Ruritania policy problem. To this compilation of factual data and analysis, whether supplied in separate memoranda or as a staff study, have contributed the vast resources of the informed departments and agencies of government, the brains and experience of the operating personnel who work day after day in the particular area of Ruritania and have learned at first hand the strengths and limitations involved, the very persons who staff the departments and agencies that will be called upon to implement this policy they are working on when and if it receives Presidential approval.

The intelligence estimate and the departmental material are explained, discussed, and chewed over in one or more meetings of the Planning Board. A senior representative of a responsible department is likely asked to attend at the Board table and be questioned and cross-questioned about the factual information and tentative policy recommendations submitted by his department. The Board seeks to squeeze out of the material all the juice that it contains.

After these proceedings, a draft policy statement is prepared by the responsible department or by an interdepartmental or special committee. This draft will consist of a set of "general considerations" (drawn from

- 20 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

the intelligence estimate and the factual and analytical material as a basis for policy recommendations), a statement of the "general objectives" of the proposed U.S. policy toward Ruritania, a more detailed proposal for "policy guidance" in the several areas of the U.S.-Ruritania relations, and appendices covering anticipated financial costs of the proposed policy and comparison of military and economic expenditures and other data for past and future years.

At as many Planning Board meetings as required this draft statement is discussed, torn apart, revised. In the intervals between the meetings revised texts are drafted by the Planning Board assistants for consideration at the next meeting. Finally, from this arduous intellectual process emerges either full agreement on the correctness of the facts, the validity of the recommendations, and the clarity and accuracy of the text, or -- as is often the case -- sharp differences of opinion on certain major statements or recommendations. In the latter case, the draft policy statement will clearly and succinctly set forth, perhaps in parallel columns, these opposing views.

When the draft policy has been thus shaped, reshaped, corrected, revised, and finally stated, it is circulated to the Council at least ten days before the meeting which is to take up policy on Ruritania. Council members will thus have sufficient time to be briefed on the subject and familiarize themselves with the contents of the draft, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff will have time to express in writing and circulate to Council members their formal military views on the exact text which the Council is to consider.

That is my concept of how the integrating procedure of the NSC mechanism should work when it is working at its best. Some such procedure is the desired goal, a goal often approximated in actual performance. The views of all who have a legitimate interest in the subject are heard, digested, and combined, or in the case of disagreement stated separately. In a good many instances the views of experts or knowledgeable people from "outside of government" are sought and worked into the fabric at the Planning Board level. The intelligence estimates, the military views, the political views, the economic views, the fiscal views, views on the psychological impact -- all are canvassed and integrated before the President is asked to hear the case argued and comes to his decision.

It is certainly true that human beings are fallible and that the instruments which they create are always susceptible of improvement. The mechanism which I have described, and its operation, can and will be improved as time goes on. But the main course of this integrative process seems to me mechanically and operatively sound. And it must be grounded on the firm base of the best and latest intelligence.

- 21 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt

ON ESTIMATING REACTIONS *

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The most fascinating and frustrating of the National Intelligence Estimates which an estimates officer writes begin as follows:

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Communist reactions to a U.S. course of action involving . . .

These estimates form a quite distinct category. They originate in a unique way; they pose special problems of organization; their coordination with the representatives of the USIB member agencies is exceptionally difficult; and final USIB approval almost always requires more than one meeting, often more than two. Herein reside the frustrations, to which I shall devote the greater part of what follows. The fascination lies in the assurance that the drafter is involved in major and immediate decisions of U.S. policy. No other estimates can generate in his breast quite such a sharp sense of relevance to action.

These papers are often miscalled "contingency estimates." Contingencies figure in almost all NIEs. Sometimes they concern what one foreign country may do if a neighbor takes certain steps, e.g., what Pakistan will do if India embarks on a nuclear weapons program. Sometimes a contingency lying in possible U.S. action is examined as part of a wider study, e.g., in the course of a general estimate on South Korea, ROK reactions to a reduction of U.S. military aid may be explored. To avoid confusion with these, it will be useful to reserve the term "reaction estimates" for those NIEs which are addressed exclusively to the question of other countries' -- usually Communist powers' -- responses to a postulated U.S. course of action in a crisis situation.

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer, 1965, pp. 1-6.

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Origination

Reaction estimates are never self-initiated. They are commissioned by policy-making departments which are considering taking some specific course of action and want an appraisal of how the enemy will probably respond. They are invariably written against short deadlines and deal with immediately critical problems. Those of the last few years have dealt principally with three situations -- Berlin, Laos, and Vietnam. The first were requested by the Berlin Task Force in the State Department; the father of the other two sets is an alumnus of the Office of National Estimates who migrated to policy-making posts and established a practice -- now sustained by the White House, the Joint Chiefs, and others -- of subjecting a great variety of Indochina policy proposals to the estimative test.

After writing quite a number of reaction estimates, I'm still not entirely sure why requesters keep on asking for them. The results, as we shall see, are often of dubious value. Sometimes I suspect that the commissions come from opponents of the policy proposal who hope that the estimators will help them kill it. But the process does reflect a fundamental principle of intelligence: that when early enemy reactions are the critical test of a policy proposal, these reactions should be estimated in advance, not by proponents or opponents, but by someone uninvolved in the heat of policy contention. Full objectivity is of course a counsel of perfection, but I think it correct, not merely charitable, to say that the policy makers should and do feel better -- feel protected against the full force of bias -- when they have an outside opinion. And since these matters are too sensitive to be submitted to public opinion, they turn to intelligence as an inside outsider.

Terms of Reference

And intelligence always bucks. We are never satisfied with the way the questions are put. They are far too general; we need a clearer idea of what the United States proposes to do; in particular we need sharper distinctions among the various steps to be taken in a sequence. Very well, responds the policy maker, and lists for us four major steps and a dozen specific actions within each, including inter alia, say, the exact inventory of implements to be used in each of three probes on the Berlin autobahn. Now we are really outraged. Perhaps, we say, we can provide some general guidance, but how do you expect us to distinguish between reactions on the one hand to ten air sorties against troop concentrations in Laos with high explosives and on the other to fifteen sorties against lines of communication with napalm?

It would be nice to think that we eventually sort out with the requester the proper level of detail and can proceed to answer questions which are governed by the limits of professional intelligence and human judgment.

Unfortunately, this is often not the case; the question of proper terms of reference dogs us to the very end of the process. The reason, I am sorry to say, is that we are not "outside" after all. Each of the intelligence agencies works for a particular policy maker. Even the Director of Central Intelligence is, under one of his hats, a senior policy advisor to the President. And it is uncanny how the choice of a level of detail will influence the estimated enemy reaction, and therefore the seeming wisdom of the proposed policy. A proposal may appear to bloom with fair prospects when viewed in a general way, yet prove to be studded with thorns when examined in detail. Surely everyone can understand this; how many bright ideas have we all had which might survive one or at most two levels of detailed criticism but fell apart at the third? And when that third level is reached, do we not insist that it's a good idea "in principle" and plead for a reconsideration at the higher, more favorable level of generalization?

Other Kinds of Bias

That was a fairly subtle point. A more obvious one is that the participating agencies may already, at their policy-making summits, have decided what they think about the proposed U.S. course. Their intelligence arms are then under pressure, of course, to bend the estimate toward these conclusions. There are two barriers against this: the fortitude of the drafter and the chairman, and the collective conscience -- a sense of mutual responsibility, really -- which has grown up over the years in the estimative community. The latter works surprisingly well most of the time.

Another source of bias, again on the subtle side, lies in the fact that the estimators are American citizens, rooting for their country. If the policy proposal is not outrageously unreasonable, it is well-nigh impossible for us to bring ourselves to a firm estimate that the United States is bound to lose. We can make differential judgments in which some parts of the policy look more likely than others to produce the desired results. But at some point the course of action will usually culminate in a sheer test of will, and how can we bring ourselves to estimate that we will be the first to falter?¹

But having bared all these misgivings, I remain persuaded that the policy maker is better off for having solicited an estimate of enemy

¹This irreducible element of bias probably saved us (the estimators, not the United States) in a series of Berlin estimates. The USSR's local advantages seemed overwhelming, and it was very hard to see how various U.S. courses of action could surmount the crisis. Gritting our teeth, we estimated some even chances. More important, the President gritted his teeth and made us right.

reactions from intelligence agencies which, bureaucratically tied though they are to policy departments, are by training and inclination and conscience freer from commitments to policy than he and his colleagues are. And so we proceed with the drafting, knowing that we will have to continue solving and re-solving the terms-of-reference question as honestly as we can.

The Drafting

(Though the precepts which follow may all be golden truths, they are not likely to be of much help to the next estimator who has to draft a reaction estimate. This poor fellow will have to read the request, negotiate its unclarities with some ill-informed representative of the requester, exchange confusions with the newly appointed chairman of the estimate, and produce a first draft -- all within 24 or ten or even six hours. Theory is gray, Lenin remarked, but the tree of life is ever green. Or, as Stalin put it, cadres decide everything.)

Through the bitter experience of many redrafts I have learned that it is absolutely indispensable to begin a reaction estimate with an analysis of the situation preceding the U.S. action proposed. Usually, in fact, it is necessary to back up two steps: In many cases the U.S. policy presupposes an enemy initiative which then sets us into motion along the hypothesized line. What, then, did he mean by this action? Did he expect our reaction, in which case he presumably has a preplanned counter-reaction? Or would he be taken aback by what we did and discover himself in the midst of some major miscalculation, unready with a next move and wholly uncertain about further U.S. intentions? These questions make a great deal of difference. Often no single answer can be given, and instead there emerge alternative analyses which must then be run out in parallel through the remainder of the estimate. Well why not, you say, but I promise you that this plays hell with drafting a paper simple and intelligible enough to be useful.

An ordinary NIE -- on Soviet military policy, say, or the outlook for Brazil -- has a theme, a tone. A competent drafter will marshal his facts and his ideas and construct an argument which leads to a single or a few major conclusions. If he does not, there's no use writing the estimate. If he does, and if he constructs well, then his betters² may tug and pull at his paragraphs, alter his adjectives, and qualify his estimative passages, but his message still comes through.

²First the Board of National Estimates, then the representatives of the USIB agencies, finally the USIB itself.

It is fatal to approach a reaction estimate in this fashion. The drafter will encounter a long succession of close judgments as he works his way through the paper. Most of them will be near the 50-50 mark; if they were not, the estimate would not have been requested. He will make some of them in one direction, others in the opposite. He will estimate "desirable" reactions to some U.S. moves, "undesirable" ones to others. Out of the sum total of these, some general theme may in the end emerge, but he had better let this happen rather than aim at it. For his paper consists essentially of nothing but this succession of judgments, and many of them will be changed before the USIB finally signs off. If his draft is built around a theme, he will have to re-structure, probably sooner rather than later.

But he can make his contribution. In thinking through the questions, he can try to find the turning points, the stage or stages which constitute, in Alsopian language, the "crunch." This, I think, is a real service. It tells the policy maker, not what will happen, but what to worry most or pray hardest about. It tells him about the moment of truth -- what its content will be and where, as he gropes along an uncertain path, he may expect to encounter it. To do this well is a triumph.

If he is lucky enough to find a turning point, the wise drafter will stop and point in both directions. He will give a scrupulously complete list of arguments why the enemy might do what we want him to do. Then he will give an exhaustive set of reasons why the enemy might do just the opposite. This is another service. It gets the policy maker to think about all the factors, the unpleasant as well as the pleasant ones. And it insures that he cannot dismiss the conclusion which follows on the grounds that the intelligence people forgot something important.

The Result

Once this is done, the drafter can be rather casual about which direction he chooses. It doesn't much matter; the Director will make up his mind, some USIB members will join him in the text, and others will take footnotes of dissent. But if the text has not laid the proper groundwork for these decisions, the drafter will have to endure an hour of confused argument at the USIB table and then start over again.

Nor, I would maintain, should it make very much difference what the USIB decides. The President surely would be silly to let his decision be determined by whether intelligence said the chances were "slightly better than even" or "slightly worse than even." In the first place, the policy proposal has probably been changed in two or three minor ways, just enough to render the estimate slightly inapplicable, when he gets it. In the second place, the policy would assuredly be modified in the course of its implementation, enough to render the estimate more than slightly inapplicable. In the third and resounding place, everyone from

drafter to President knows that the future is plain unknowable.

Well then, why write a reaction estimate? Because it is always a help to have the issues defined. Because the estimate may serve to highlight a forgotten or glossed-over problem. Because it may dispose of some wild, far-out ideas which heretofore had not been adequately confronted. Because a sober and at least partially disinterested accounting of risks and chances may not be available from any other source. Because subsequent policy argument can perhaps be more realistic.

You will notice that I have been very sparing of examples. This is because all reaction estimates are classified Top Secret and distributed to a small readership. In fact, they are not even accorded a permanent printing. Garden-variety NIEs get their conclusions distributed as rapidly as possible, after USIB approval, in an informal offset version. Subsequently the reader receives a handsome printed version of the full text. Reaction estimates get the first treatment but not the second. Thus their covers bear two of the finest, most lucid sentences ever written in the U.S. Government:

"NOTE: This is the estimate. No further versions will be published."

B. PROBLEMS OF ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

NOTES ON "CAPABILITIES" IN NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE *

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I

When CIA was established with the mission of producing "national" intelligence it perforce drew heavily for doctrine upon the military intelligence agencies. Over the years, the intelligence organizations of the armed forces had developed a well-tested routine. Formulas were available to meet various requirements. Agreement had gradually been reached on what needed to be known about the enemy, what data were necessary for the estimate, why they were necessary, and how they could most usefully be presented. CIA had no counterpart to this doctrine. It therefore frequently borrowed from the military, and in no instance was this borrowing more conspicuous than in the matter of "capabilities."

The doctrine of enemy capabilities was one of the most characteristic and useful that military intelligence has to offer. A capability is a course of action or a faculty for development which lies within the capacity of the person or thing concerned. More particularly, in military intelligence, enemy capabilities are courses of action of which the enemy is physically capable and which would, if adopted and carried through, affect our own commander's mission.*** In short, a

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring, 1957, pp. 1-18.

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*** "capabilities, enemy -- Those courses of action of which the enemy is physically capable and which if adopted will affect the accomplishment of our mission. The term "capabilities" includes not only the general courses of action open to the enemy such as attack, defense, or withdrawal but also all the particular courses of action possible under each general course of action. "Enemy capabilities" are considered in the light of all known factors affecting military operations including time, space, weather, terrain, and the strength and disposition of enemy forces..." Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

list of enemy capabilities is a list of the things that the enemy can do. It is therefore apt to be the most significant part of a military intelligence officer's "Estimate of the Enemy Situation."

It is true, of course, that a military intelligence officer collects and transmits to his commander a great deal of other information. He reports on the weather, terrain, and communications in the zone of operations. He may set forth the politics and economics of the area. He collects and evaluates data on the enemy's order of battle, logistical apparatus, equipment, weapons, morale, training and the like. All this is made known to the commander, but it is still not a statement of enemy capabilities. Only when the intelligence officer has acquired all this information, and constructively brooded over it, can he set about describing the courses of action open to the enemy. It is this list of capabilities that tells the commander what, under the conditions existing in the area, the enemy can do with his troops, his weapons, and his equipment to affect the commander's own mission. The enumeration and description of enemy capabilities is the ultimate, or at least the penultimate, goal of military intelligence. It is one of the characteristic modes to which the great mass of intelligence information available is bent, in order to give the commander the knowledge of the enemy he needs to plan his own operations.

Adaptation of this doctrine to the requirements of national intelligence presents at first no real difficulty. Courses of action may be attributed to persons, organizations, parties, nations, or groups of nations as well as to military units, and to friendly or neutral, as well as to enemy, powers. They may be political, economic, psychological, diplomatic, and so on, as well as military. It is true that a national intelligence estimate * is not made for a military commander with a clearly defined mission, to which enemy capabilities may be referred to ascertain if they do in fact "affect" the carrying-out of that mission. An equivalent for the commander's mission is not far to seek, however, since national intelligence is obviously concerned only with foreign courses of action which may affect the policies or interests -- above all the security interests -- of the United States. It is by no means as easy to be clear about all the policies and interests of the United States, and to perceive what might affect them, as it is to understand the mission of a military commander, which is supposed to be unequivocally stated in a directive from higher authority. But this is one of the

* Throughout this paper the term "national intelligence estimate" is used generally to mean not just the solemnly coordinated "National Intelligence Estimates" approved by the Intelligence Advisory Committee, but any estimate, great or small, made by any office or person producing national intelligence.

reasons why a national intelligence estimate is apt to be more difficult to prepare than a military estimate of an enemy situation.

In national intelligence, then, capabilities may be defined as courses of action within the power of a foreign nation or organization which would, if carried out, affect the security interests of the United States.

It is probably unnecessary to argue that statements of capabilities are useful as a means of organizing and presenting national intelligence. The parallel with military intelligence doctrine seems perfectly sound. High policy-makers doubtless want to be supplied with authoritative descriptions and analyses of the politics, economics, and military establishments of various foreign nations, together with explanations of the objectives, policies, and habitual modes of action of these nations. They need to have the best possible statistics, diagrams, pictures, and data in general. But when all the labor and research has been finished, the results collated and criticized, and the conclusions written down, it will still be worthwhile to go on to a statement of what each foreign nation or organization can do to affect the interests of the United States. This is the statement of capabilities.

In recognizing, formulating, testing, and presenting foreign capabilities intelligence doctrine comes into its own. Apart from the special function of intelligence operations in collecting data, most of the preliminary spade-work for intelligence estimates is the province of other disciplines than that specifically of intelligence. This spade-work of course takes nine-tenths of the time, trouble, and space devoted to any estimate. Political scientists analyze the structure of government and politics in a foreign state; economists lay bare its economic situation; order-of-battle men reveal the condition of the military establishment; sociologists, historians, philosophers, natural scientists, and all manner of experts make their contribution. When all this has been done it is the peculiar function of intelligence itself to see that the learning and wisdom of experts is directed towards determining what the foreign nation can do to affect US interests. Thereby the major disciplines of social and natural science are turned to the special requirements of intelligence estimates.

Let us be careful not to confuse this with the function of prophecy. To predict what a foreign nation will do is a necessary and useful pursuit, albeit dangerous; it rests on knowledge, judgment, experience, divination, and luck. To set forth what a nation can do is a different matter. One still needs judgment, experience and luck as well as knowledge, but soothsaying is reduced to a minimum. There is an element of the scientific. The job can be taught, and its techniques refined. It can be reduced to doctrine.

II

Generally speaking, in military usage an enemy capability is stated without reference to the possible counteractions which one's own commander may devise to offset or prevent such action. The Navy's handbook entitled Sound Military Decision puts it this way (italics added): "Capabilities . . . indicate actions which the force concerned, unless fore-stalled or prevented from taking such actions, has the capacity to carry out." Here are three examples:

- a. The Bloc has the capability to launch large-scale, short-haul amphibious operations in the Baltic and Black Seas.
- b. The USSR has the capability to launch general war.
- c. The Chinese Communists have the capability to commit and to support approximately 150,000 troops in Indochina.

These statements give no estimate of what the effects or results of any of these courses of action might be. There is no indication for example that the United States or some other power might be able to make it difficult or impossible for the Chinese Communists to support 150,000 troops in Indochina, or that the West might possess such strength that a Soviet decision to launch general war would be tantamount to suicide. The statements simply lay down what the nations concerned could do, without regard to any possible opposition or counteraction. Such unopposed capabilities are frequently referred to as "gross" or "raw" capabilities. They are the kind of enemy capabilities which are reported to a military commander by his G-2, in the "Estimate of the Enemy Situation."

The high policy-makers for whom national intelligence is designed, however, are not in the comparatively simple position of military commanders facing an enemy. They have broader fields to cover, and more numerous problems to face. They need to have a picture of the security situation in the world as a whole and in various areas of the world. This picture ought to show not only the multifarious forces which exist, but also the probable resultants of these forces as they act upon each other, or as they might act upon each other if they were set in motion. The policy-makers need, in short, to know about net capabilities, not merely about gross or raw capabilities.

This is well understood and accepted as long as the courses of action of foreign nations alone are concerned. Nobody would think of enumerating the capabilities of France, for example, without giving due consideration to the frequently opposing capabilities of Germany, and to the tangential capabilities of Great Britain and other powers. Even in the purely military sphere, statements of net capabilities occur in national estimates. For example:

- a. In Israel, an army of 49,000 . . . is capable of defeating any of its immediate neighbors.
- b. The Chinese Communists have the capability for conquering Burma.
- c. We believe that the Chinese Communists are capable of taking the island of Quemoy if opposed by Chinese Nationalist forces only.

It is an intricate and difficult operation even to attempt to work out the probable resultants of the enormous forces actually or potentially at work in the world -- political, economic, military, and the like. Without such an operation, however -- sometimes called "war-gaming" when limited strictly to the military sphere -- national intelligence estimates of capabilities would lose much of their usefulness for the particular purpose they are designed to serve.

Obviously no estimate of the security situation anywhere in the world will be worth much unless the capabilities of the United States are taken into account and their effect weighed. At this point, however, grave practical difficulties arise. We of the intelligence community are solemnly warned that we must not "G-2 our own policy." Military authorities are shocked at the suggestion that we should indulge in "war-gaming." We are told that it is the function of the commander, not of the intelligence officer, to decide what counteraction to adopt against enemy capabilities, and to judge what the success of such counteraction may be. It is pointed out that no adequate estimate of net military capabilities can be made without a full knowledge of US war plans, and a long and highly technical exercise in war-gaming by large numbers of qualified experts. Since intelligence agencies as such quite properly have no knowledge of US war plans, and possess no elaborate machinery for war-gaming, they are estopped from making an estimate of net capabilities where US forces are significantly involved. As a result there is, for instance, no statement in any national intelligence estimate of how the military security situation on the continent of Europe really stands, i.e., of the probable net capabilities of Soviet forces against the opposition they would be likely to meet if they attempted an invasion of the continent.

This state of affairs is unfortunate, and the value of national intelligence estimates is thereby reduced below what it ought to be. The difficulty is really not one of intelligence doctrine, however. Practically nobody doubts that high policy-makers ought to be supplied with estimates of net capabilities even in situations where the US is actively engaged. It is agreed that they ought to have the best possible opinion on the security situation on the continent of Europe, and that they must be informed not merely of the gross capabilities of the USSR to launch air and other attacks on the US (the subject of an annual National Intelligence

Estimate) but of what the USSR could probably accomplish by such an attack against the defenses that the US and its allies would put up. In one way or another policy-makers get such estimates of net capabilities, even if they have sometimes to make them themselves, off the cuff.

The question is, then, not whether estimates of net capabilities are legitimate requirements, but simply who shall make them. This problem is outside the scope of a paper on intelligence doctrine. It may be suggested, however, that the difficulty has probably been somewhat exaggerated. The jealous prohibition of "war-gaming," on grounds that to conduct it requires a knowledge of US war plans and an enormous apparatus with numerous personnel, is overdone. In four out of five situations where an estimate of net military capabilities is needed the judgment of wise and experienced military men, based on only a general knowledge of US war plans, is likely to be about as useful as the most elaborate and protracted piece of war-gaming. Such exercises have too often given the wrong answer -- they are really no more dependable as guides to the outcome of future wars than research in economics is dependable as an indicator of the future behavior of the stock market. This does not mean, of course, that economics and war-gaming are useless pursuits.

Gradually, indeed, the difficulties respecting estimates of net capabilities are disappearing. In the most critical situations -- air attack on the United States, for example, and perhaps the security situation in Europe -- it may be necessary to establish special machinery for the most careful playing-out of the problems and ascertainment of net capabilities. In less critical situations the trouble is solving itself. Military men are becoming a little less shy of making an educated guess as to net capabilities, even when US forces are involved, and the community is not as distressed as it used to be at the accusation of "G-2ing US policy." A doctrine is gradually being evolved by trial and error, which is as it should be. Some day it may be desirable to commit the evolved doctrine to writing, but the time has not yet arrived.

III

Of course any foreign nation of consequence is physically capable of a vast number of courses of action which would affect the security interests of the United States. One task of intelligence (after the spadework is complete) is to recognize these capabilities; another is to test them against known facts to make certain they are real and not imaginary; a third is to test them one against another to see how many could be carried out simultaneously, and how many may be mutually exclusive; a fourth is to work out in reasonable detail the implications, for the nation concerned and for the United States, of the actual implementation of each

important capability. I propose to pass over all these tasks without further discussion, and to concentrate on the problem of selecting from among the capabilities those which are to be included in the formal estimate. For even after all the testing is finished there will still remain far too many capabilities to put into any document of reasonable size. Considerations of space, time, and the patience of readers make it imperative that some principles of exclusion be adopted, so that the list of capabilities presented will be useful rather than merely exhaustive.

Capabilities are excluded from national estimates for one of two reasons: either because they are judged unlikely to be actually adopted and carried through, or because they are considered to be so insignificant that they could be implemented without more than minor effect on the security interests of the United States. For short we may say that they are excluded on grounds either of improbability or of unimportance.

The second of these criteria does not require much discussion. Clearly it would be a waste of time and paper to fill a national estimate with lists of courses of action which, even if carried out, would affect the security interests of the United States only to an insignificant degree. One applies common sense in this matter, and forthwith rejects a great number of capabilities from further consideration. Along with common sense, however, there ought always to be plenty of specialized knowledge available. Everyone knows that an expert can sometimes point out major significance in things which are to the uninformed view negligible, and conversely that experts will sometimes inflate the importance of things which common sense and general knowledge can see in juster proportion. Out of discussion and argument on these matters comes the best verdict as to the importance or unimportance of a given foreign capability, and the best guidance as to whether it should be put into the formal estimate.

To reject any foreign capability because we judge it unlikely to be implemented is a more serious and difficult matter. Here indeed we part company with military doctrine, which frowns upon the exclusion from an estimate of any enemy capabilities whatever, and especially condemns any exclusion on grounds of improbability. There has been much debate, among the military, on whether an intelligence officer should presume to put into his formal estimate an opinion as to which of the enemy capabilities listed is most likely to be implemented. It has been said that such a judgment is for the commander alone to make, and some have even held that the commander himself must not make it, but must treat all enemy capabilities as if they were sure to be carried through, and must prepare to deal with them all. This latter doctrine is somewhat academic. It is doubtful that any intelligence officer, or any commander worth his salt, has ever acted strictly in accordance with it. Yet it remains that according to the more rigorous teachings of military intelligence no enemy capability of any consequence may be omitted from the list presented to the commander. The disasters which can result from even a carefully considered exclusion have been frequently pointed out.

Nevertheless, in a national intelligence estimate we must for the reasons already stated exclude many foreign capabilities because we judge them unlikely to be carried out. The unlikelihood is in turn generally established on one or more of three grounds, namely, that implementation of the capability (a) would be unrelated to, or incompatible with, national objectives of the country under consideration; (b) would run counter to the political, moral, or psychological compulsions under which the nation, or its rulers, operate; or (c) would entail consequences so adverse as to be unprofitable.

The most obvious capabilities to exclude are those which, if implemented, would serve no objective of the nation under consideration, or would clearly run counter to some of that nation's objectives. Thus we do not bother about the possibility that the British might conquer Iceland, although they certainly could do so and if they did US security interests would be affected. The conquest of Iceland, however would serve no British objective that we know of, at least in time of peace. Again, it is clearly within the power of the USSR to give up its Satellites, renounce its connections with Communist China, and retire modestly into isolation. Or the British might, in order to improve their economic condition, abandon all armaments and cease to be a world power. We do not give such capabilities serious consideration, however, because we believe them manifestly contrary to the fundamental aims of the Soviets and British respectively. By applying this sort of standard we can immediately reject a great number of courses of action which lie within the power of the nation concerned and which would affect US security interests.

One must be careful in using this test, however, for national objectives change, sometimes with changes in government, sometimes without. It is, for example, impossible to be sure about the objectives which will determine West German policy in years to come. Even the Soviets do not always appear to the Western view to act in such a fashion as to serve what we estimate to be their real aims. Moreover, all nations have various objectives, many of which are to some degree incompatible with each other. Sometimes one is governing, sometimes another. Nations can even pursue simultaneously several conflicting objectives, to the confusion of their own citizenry as well as of foreign intelligence officers. We must be very certain, before rejecting a foreign capability as incompatible with a national objective, that the objective is genuine, deeply-felt and virtually certain to govern the nation's courses of action.

The political, moral, or psychological compulsions which operate on a nation, or on its rulers, make the implementation of some of that nation's physical capabilities unlikely or even impossible. Thus, for example, it would probably be judged that the US is unlikely to undertake a strictly "preventive" war against the USSR because such an action, under any foreseeable US government, would be politically and morally unthinkable. It may similarly be true that the Soviet rulers are psychologically unable

to establish a genuine state of peaceful coexistence with capitalist states even though they may proclaim their desire to do so and may judge such a course of action conducive to the ultimate aims of Communism. There are some things that nations cannot do, despite the fact that they are physically capable of doing them and might serve their national objectives thereby.

To be sure, if a nation is politically, morally, or psychologically incapable of pursuing a given course of action that course of action is not a capability at all, and we need not worry about it. The trouble is, however, that while physical incapacities can generally be pretty satisfactorily established the same is rarely true of political, moral, or psychological incapacities. One must depend more on judgment and less upon demonstrable certainty for an estimate in the matter. Not many would have estimated, before the fact, that Tito would be psychologically capable of turning against Stalin, or that the Germans would be morally capable of supporting Hitler, or that the United States would be politically capable of abandoning isolationism. Experience warns us against undue confidence in our estimates of national character, and it will be safer to consider as capabilities all courses of action which a nation is physically able to carry through, rejecting many as improbable but none as impossible.

Finally, we reject from our estimate those capabilities which would, if implemented, lead to such adverse consequences as to be unprofitable. There are, curiously enough, very few foreign capabilities which will pass the tests already mentioned, and then have to be excluded on this ground. This is because most courses of action having indubitably dire consequences will by reason of that fact alone run counter to the objectives or to the political, moral, or psychological compulsions of the nation. Those few which are left are generally military in nature and are apt to be so important that we include them in the estimate anyway. Thus it is clear that general war with the US would be hazardous and perhaps disastrous for the USSR. It therefore seems highly improbable that the Soviets will deliberately run grave risks of involving themselves in such a war, yet no national estimate on the USSR would omit mention of the capabilities of that nation for conducting war with the US. The same holds true for the capabilities of the Nationalist Chinese to invade the mainland, or of the South Koreans to attack North Korea. We may judge such capabilities improbable of implementation, but we do not exclude them from our estimate.

By applying the tests of importance and of probability, as described above, the vast number of capabilities of any foreign nation will speedily be reduced to manageable proportions. The process of exclusion will at first be almost unconscious -- most capabilities will be rejected forthwith, without doubt or debate. When this stage has been accomplished, however, there will still remain a formidably long list which will require

more serious consideration. Exclusion becomes more difficult, and begins to require longer discussion and maturer judgment. The same criteria of choice continue valid, but are applied with more deliberation. This is the point at which preparation of the estimate gets interesting, for the choice of capabilities to include or exclude may prove to be the most crucial decision made during the estimating process.

Though we have departed from the military doctrine in allowing a rejection of capabilities judged unlikely of implementation, we may still return to it for an important lesson. Like the military commander, the high policy-maker is entitled to something more than intelligence's opinion of what foreign nations will probably do. He is entitled to be informed of various reasonable alternative possibilities, and to be given some discussion of these alternatives -- of their apparent advantages and disadvantages, and of the reasons why intelligence deems them respectively to be less or more likely of implementation. National estimates sometimes discuss only the particular foreign capabilities which the intelligence community in its wisdom believes will actually be carried through. This is going too far in exclusion. Intelligence must winnow the mass of capabilities down to two or three or half a dozen in each situation examined, but it is the responsibility of policy-makers, not of intelligence agencies, to decide which among these few last alternatives shall in fact constitute the intelligence basis for US policy.

IV

Looking back over old national estimates one is apt to feel that the borrowing of military terminology was sometimes a little over-enthusiastic. The word "capability," for example, offers an almost irresistible temptation to all of us who compose governmental gobbledegook. It is a long, abstract noun, of Latin derivation, and it has a pleasing air of technicality and precision. It will appear to lend portentousness to an otherwise simple statement. Perhaps this is why the word appears in estimates so frequently, unnecessarily, and sometimes even incorrectly.

One trouble is that the word has a perfectly good, nontechnical meaning, signifying a quality, capacity, or faculty capable of development. It is commoner in the plural, when it usually denotes in a general way the potentialities of the possessor, as when we say that a man "has good capabilities." This usage is frequent in estimates:

- a. The air defense capabilities of the Bloc have increased substantially since 1945.
- b. Chinese Communists and North Korean capabilities in North Korea have increased substantially.

- c. The capabilities of the new fighter aircraft are superior to those of the old.

No valid objection can be taken to these examples. Indeed, the usage is virtually the same as that of the technical term, for the statements are about the things that the possessors of the capabilities can do.

One can find, however, a good many examples of slipshod usage:

- a. Satellite capabilities for attack on Greece and particularly on Turkey are too limited for conquest of those countries.
- b. The Tudeh Party's capabilities for gaining control of Iran by default are almost certain to increase if the oil dispute is not settled.

There is no good reason for using the word "capabilities" in either of these statements; in the first the word should probably be "resources," in the second, "chances" or "prospects." If one really insists on talking about capabilities then the statements ought to be rephrased: "The Satellites are not capable of conquering Greece or Turkey," and "If the oil dispute is not settled, conditions in Iran will be such that the Tudeh Party may acquire the capability to gain control of the country."

It will be perceived that the immediately foregoing examples are statements of net capabilities, and it is in connection with such statements that imprecise drafting most frequently occurs. It must be remembered that in a relationship between two nations (or other organizations) the gross capabilities of one side can be increased or decreased only by an increase or decrease in the strength, resources, skills, etc., of that side; what happens on the other side is irrelevant. The net capabilities of one side, however, may be altered either by a change in its own strengths and resources or by a change in those of the other side. For example, suppose that the strengths and resources of the United States and the USSR both increase in the same proportion. Then the gross capabilities of each side will have increased, but the net capabilities will have remained unchanged. But, if the USSR should grow weaker, while the United States made no change in its strength, then the net capabilities of the United States would have increased although its gross capabilities remained unchanged.

This is simple enough, but it needs to be understood if drafting is to be accurate and clear. Consider the following example:

In South Korea and Taiwan where US commitments provide both physical security and political support of the established regimes, present Communist capabilities for political warfare are extremely small. If the US commitment and physical

- 44 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

protection were withdrawn for any reason, substantial and early Communist political warfare successes almost certainly would occur.

The first of the two sentences in this quotation can only be understood as a statement concerning gross capabilities, although to be sure the word is used in its non-technical sense. But the second sentence reveals that Communist gross capabilities, far from being "small," are in fact very considerable. The two sentences together constitute a statement of net capabilities, but the drafting is poor. Perhaps a rule to govern this problem may be formulated in this way: when the word "capability" or "capabilities" is used in its non-technical sense, signifying in a general way the qualities, faculties, or potential of the possessor, it must be used only to refer to gross, and never to net capabilities. If there is any question, doubt or difficulty, the word ought to be avoided and a synonym chosen.

Finally, even when using the word in its technical meaning of a specific course of action, the drafter ought always to make clear whether he is referring to gross or net capability. For example:

- a. We estimate that the armed forces of the USSR have the capability of overrunning continental Europe with a relatively short period.
- b. The Party almost certainly lacks the capability for seizing control of the Japanese government during the period of this estimate.

The first of these statements is unclear because the word "overrunning" does not indicate beyond doubt (as "conquer" or "defeat" do in some examples previously quoted) whether the statement is or is not one of net capability. Does the sentence mean that the armies of the USSR can overrun Europe against all the opposition that the West may put up? Or does it mean only that the USSR has enough men and logistical apparatus to spread into all of continental Europe within a relatively short period if unopposed? The second example is clearer, but still it does not indicate beyond doubt whether the Party is unable to seize power because the Japanese government is strong enough to prevent it, or whether the Party simply lacks the men and talent to take over the job of governing Japan even if no one opposed its doing so.

Apart from such suggestions for clarity in drafting as those given above, it would be premature to lay down rules for the statement of capabilities in a national intelligence estimate. Sometimes it may be desirable to list them seriatim, as the military generally do in their estimates of the enemy situation. This might be a wholesome exercise while drafting an estimate even if it were not retained in the final version, for it would tend to promote precision, to reveal inter-relationships and produce groupings of related capabilities, and thus to prevent the indiscriminate scattering

- 45 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

through an estimate of statements of capabilities in bits and pieces. On the other hand, the number and complexity of courses of action which have to be presented may often be so great that extensive listing would be tedious, and attempts at grouping misleading. A connected essay (in which, incidentally, the word capability or capabilities need never appear) may convey the material far more adequately.

These matters will be improved by experimentation, and by the talent of those who draft estimates. Improvement is worth trying for, in this as in other aspects of estimating capabilities. It is a great and responsible task to survey the whole political, economic, and military strengths of a nation, to ascertain its objectives and the moral and political compulsions that govern its conduct, to weigh all these matters in the light of that nation's relation to other nations, to perceive what that nation could do to affect the security interests of the United States, and to select from among these manifold courses of action those sufficiently important and feasible to be included in a national estimate. The techniques of this task are still in a formative stage. They will develop through experience, through trial and error, through discussion and argument, and perhaps, from time to time, through purely theoretical and doctrinal investigation.

NOTES ON SOME ASPECTS OF INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES *

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Members of the intelligence community will obviously find useful reading in the articles by [REDACTED] *** These studies deserve the attention of other groups as well. They are of particular value to military commanders and planners and to their civilian counterparts in both government and private life. The executive and the planner are the prime consumers of the intelligence product. Furthermore, since they and not the intelligence officer are ultimately responsible for action taken, they are and should be the sharpest critics of that product.

These consumers, therefore, need to understand the various kinds of approaches which the intelligence officer can make to his problem. In consultation with him, they should develop an agreed approach -- embodying either as discussed in our military and other staff manuals or possibly as modified by ideas developed in these papers.

Business executives and planners were mentioned above along with military and government officials because study of modern business organization and practice makes it quite clear that the more effective enterprises engage in intelligence activities in one form or another.

To bring out the parallel with national and military intelligence, we may note that business intelligence comprises evaluated information concerning such matters as: the actual and potential users of the goods and services the business produces; the actions and plans of competitors; related goods and services; and other factors which bear on the production, marketing, and use of the product. Among the "intelligence activities" in which most business organizations engage we can include market analysis, research and development, and the collection of general business information.

Market analysis is essentially an intelligence activity, for it covers not only what the product may or might do but also what other firms and

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring, 1957, pp. 19-37.

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** [REDACTED] was formerly an employee of the DD/P.

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*** A review of a MSS on "The Hazards and Advantages of Estimates of Enemy Intentions," by [REDACTED] Jr. appeared in the same issue of Studies in Intelligence as Mr. [REDACTED] article.

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products may do or are doing. Credit information on firms and individuals is perhaps the most direct form of intelligence used by business.

Research and development is an intelligence activity in the sense that it yields information on which to gauge the value of one's own product as well as that of actual and potential competitors. Research and development have become so important that investment analysts now consider the size and quality of this effort an important factor in determining the value of a security.

Finally, no business of any stature can plan without giving at least a quick glance at political, economic, and sociological data. It is inconceivable that either Ford or the UAW in 1954 planned for 1955 without considering international affairs, the domestic political situation, and the sociological "climate" which might make it propitious to raise the issue of the guaranteed annual wage. The tremendous growth in the number of trade and commercial publications is an indication of the interest in business intelligence information.

This is not the proper place to pursue this matter further and discuss whether or not business would improve its lot by openly recognizing its intelligence requirement and organizing more specifically for it. It is useful to note, however, that World War I taught business leaders the value of the line and staff principle of organization and that World War II has already given them clear object lessons in operations analysis and on research and development. "Business intelligence," full-fledged, may well be the next important step.

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It has seemed worthwhile to mention this point because we want to go along with Mr. [REDACTED] who believes that military intelligence doctrine has application in national policy processes. In fact, we want to go further and assert that the basic concepts -- not necessarily all the detailed precepts and procedures -- have application to any form of human activity: political, economic, scientific, or sociological.

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There is some reason to suspect that both Mr. [REDACTED] have misinterpreted or misunderstood some of these basic concepts. We propose to deal with these misunderstandings as they come up in our discussion of the two papers. At this point, it is useful to cover one matter which both seem to have failed to keep clearly in mind. It is the fact that both the intelligence officer and the commander (or policy-maker) are in the estimating business.

The Intelligence Function and the Command Function

The intelligence officer is the "expert" on the enemy. Accordingly, he is charged with giving the commander, the staff, and subordinate commands the best information and estimates on the enemy situation. The end product

of his estimate is enemy capabilities and -- let us not forget -- where available information provides a basis for such judgment, the relative probability of adoption of them.*

25X1A This is a full-time job, particularly when one considers that the intelligence officer must also continuously provide his command -- and, in addition, assist in providing subordinate, adjacent, and senior commands -- with the information and intelligence they require for their day-to-day operations as distinguished from that needed for estimates. It is for this reason, rather than any slavish devotion to doctrine that, as Mr. [REDACTED] points out,** some persons hold that the intelligence officer should not deal in the capabilities and lines of action of his own side. 25X1A Mr. [REDACTED] is correct in saying that some persons oppose this from wrong motives, but that is not a fault peculiar to the military. It should also be pointed out that many planners have a supercilious view of intelligence and intelligence officers. They fancy themselves equally competent in intelligence matters. Indeed, most of them are, but the reverse is also true. Most intelligence officers are fully competent planners. Since each has a full-time job, however, each needs to tend to his own knitting to get the job done well. There needs to be, and in good commands there is, continuous close liaison at all levels in the intelligence and plans sections. Historically it is true that many commanders have leaned as much or more on their intelligence officers in planning matters as they have on their planners. In even more cases, after the whole staff was thoroughly informed about the enemy, the role of the intelligence officer appeared to be less prominent. It is noteworthy that this usually occurs on the side that is winning or has a preponderance of force. When things are tight, the intelligence officer is in great demand and, we might note, his neck is way out.

We noted above that the commander also makes an estimate. His estimate takes the enemy capabilities -- presumably as developed by the intelligence officer -- and, in the light of each capability, studies each line of action open to the command to determine the one that best accomplishes the mission. He determines the lines of action open to him by having full information about his own forces -- their position, condition, morale, supplies, supporting forces available and so on. Just as the intelligence

* FM30-5 and Principles of Strategic Intelligence, AC of S, G-2 (Feb. 50).

25X1A ** As [REDACTED] puts it: "We are told that it is the function of the commander, not of the intelligence officer, to decide what counteraction to adopt against enemy capabilities and to judge what the success of such counteraction may be."

officer contributes the information about the enemy, so many other staff officers contribute this other information which the commander must have to make a sound decision.

Let us then keep clearly in mind that, in military usage, the intelligence estimate sets forth the enemy capabilities. The commander, for his part, uses that estimate in conjunction with other information (there may be a logistics estimate, an air estimate, etc.) and makes a final "policy" estimate to determine the line of action which will best accomplish his mission.

The Military Theory of Capabilities

Many of the difficulties which Mr. [REDACTED] points out in the application of military usage in the field of national policy stem from the fact that in the national field we do not have the same common understanding of staff and command functions that obtains in the military. This is true both because the "staff" in national policy affairs, though to a degree comparable, is not a close parallel to a military staff, and because many of our policy-makers are not experienced in or familiar with staff functioning.

Against this general background, we can now examine Mr. [REDACTED] advocacy of the concept of "gross" and "net" capabilities and his contention that war-gaming should be used to improve the usefulness of our intelligence.

In reference to the first matter Mr. [REDACTED] points out the need to recognize that enemy capabilities are one thing when we study them in the light of one of our own actions and quite different when we consider them in the light of another.

To indicate these differences he uses the expressions "gross capabilities" and "net capabilities." Use of these terms brings to mind the idea of a fixed measurable quantity like the gross income of General Motors and, similarly, that a "net capability" is like GM's net income. It is quite clear that such a concept is not accurate.

Pursued to the logical end, gross capabilities would be capabilities, as it were, in a vacuum. Such capabilities have no practical meaning, both because they are limitless (without opposition the Soviets can do almost anything) and because there are no true vacuums in world affairs.

In a sense capabilities are always "net." But they are fixed only in reference to one given set of conditions. As these conditions change, the capabilities change. They are a moving picture, not a still photograph. The Soviet "net capability" to induce a peripheral war in Thailand is one thing if Thailand has the political and other support of Burma and the SEATO states and quite a different thing if it does not have such

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support. Indeed, the timing and extent of such support changes the "net capability." In military usage capabilities are always what Mr. Smith calls "net." The intelligence officer determines the enemy's capabilities as of a given time and in the light of given circumstances.* This idea is readily applicable in national strategic intelligence.

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What Mr. [REDACTED] calls gross capabilities could perhaps better be thought of as "basic" capabilities. For example, intelligence officers can readily estimate that by 1959 the Soviets could have a stockpile of X hydrogen bombs, Y rounds of atomic artillery ammunition, Z intercontinental bombers, W army divisions, and V major naval craft, and could still meet the industrial requirements of their civilian economy, provided they give no more than the current level of military aid to Red China and the Satellites. On the other hand, if they curtailed production of equipment for the Red Army and Navy they could contribute more to the armament of China and the Satellites. These are capabilities. They are basic capabilities to produce or take general action not normally subject to interference. Further analysis and research can develop what, under various assumptions, the Soviets can do with these resources and thus can determine their capabilities to act. Perhaps it is this distinction that Mr. [REDACTED] has in mind when he speaks of "gross" and "net." Even if this is the case we would still be loath to accept the concept because, in the general sense of the term, even such "gross" capabilities are "net." Rather than adopting misleading terms like "gross" and "net" we seem to be better off if we stick just to "capabilities" and understand it to apply, as in basic military doctrine, to a stated set of circumstances.

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The second point in Mr. [REDACTED] thesis that we wish to examine is the matter of war-gaming. He laments the fact that accepted practice frowns on having intelligence officers war-game the plans of their own side. We do not concede that this "frowning" is a prohibitively effective as [REDACTED] contends. To the extent that it does exist, it is directed against the idea of having the intelligence officer play both sides. This is logical. The intelligence officer cannot be "expert" on his own resources and plans as well as on those of the enemy. As pointed out earlier, the latter is a full-time job. To the extent that he thumps for joint war-gaming by intelligence estimates, however, Mr. [REDACTED] is emphatically right.

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* See quotations from Dictionary of US Military Terms for Joint Usage, cited by Mr. [REDACTED] also the description used at the Strategic Intelligence School.

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War-gaming for this particular purpose is not used as widely in the military as it might be. But the concept of war-gaming for other purposes with all staff elements participating is well established. It could easily be used in the more complex field of national estimates.

War-gaming has been modified radically in recent years with the employment of advanced mathematics and electronic computers. These techniques leave much to be desired in the military field and many of them could, at the current stage of development, be used to only a very limited extent in reference to the "imponderables" of national policy affairs. The more conventional type of war-gaming, on the other hand, could certainly be used across the board and with every possibility of making our intelligence estimates more useful.

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Mr. [REDACTED] observation that national policy-makers have a more complex problem than military leaders is valid, and it has an important bearing on the activities of the intelligence services which support them. The national policy-maker must consider a great variety of "capabilities" which interact on each other. For example, a sociological change in Germany may have an important repercussion in the political capabilities of France. Furthermore, it is always difficult to determine the "facts" in many areas of interest. The military leader usually knows how many and what kinds of guided missile squadrons, atomic bombs, fleets, and army troops he and his opponent have. The political leader is always far less certain about his "forces" and those of his allies. There is even more uncertainty about the resources the enemy can bring to bear. To illustrate, we can be sure that Khrushchev's advisers have many a headache estimating how effective the Satellites and Communist China really are and what assets the West will actually apply in various situations. In such a field, therefore, there can be no one "net" capability. There are as many "net" capabilities as there are variant situations. Mr. [REDACTED] appears to think that intelligence officers should compute these "net" capabilities by their own efforts. It would seem more logical that they should be worked out in conjunction -- and we do not mean concurrence -- with the planners. Intelligence officers and planners must sit down together and thrash out all the angles. This is precisely what happens in an efficient military staff in time of war. The formal estimates of capabilities appear only when a radical change in one's own or the enemy situation takes place. For example, after "The Bulge," 21st Army Group conducted an extended and more or less "conventional" campaign to gain the Rhine. It was obvious that crossing that formidable obstacle would call for different types of action and support. An estimate of the situation was essential.* This, in turn,

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* Both US and British strategic planners had long before been working on such plans. We are here considering the more nearly tactical planning.

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meant that intelligence forecasts and estimates had to be produced. At such times a new "stock-taking" is in order. At other times, day-to-day close coordination by the working intelligence officers and planners, with a check on interpretations of major importance by the senior intelligence and plans officers, is the best modus operandi. It keeps all concerned aware of enemy capabilities applicable to the prevailing conditions.

In the national field, a similar condition could obtain. Unhappily the lines of demarcation in staff organization are not as simple and clear as in the military. Instead of overall planners like those in the Joint Staff or in an international staff such as the Combined Staff Planners of World War II, we have political planners in State, military in Defense, economic in agencies like OES, propaganda in USIA, etc. Each of these has some form of intelligence support of its own. These intelligence agencies are tied together by CIA for national purposes and planning is brought together in the NSC. However, there is still a vast amount of "sprawling." Parenthetically, it should be noted that this statement is a description of a condition; it is not to be construed as an unfavorable criticism. This is not the occasion for such criticism; and it is by no means certain that highly centralized planning and intelligence would be best, or even better, for the country. Here, we want simply to note that close integration of intelligence into planning is difficult because of the decentralized planning and operating mechanism in the US government. A great deal of informal coordination on the working level does take place. This is all to the good and should be encouraged. This complexity of organization and operations in the national field results in a greater need for formalized estimates and is, in itself, a justification for the use of the war-gaming principle. However, with all due respect for the skill, wisdom, and judgment of our intelligence community, we should not leave war-gaming as a basis for decisions to them alone. The danger here is at least as great as it is to have the planners do it alone. We have suffered on both the military and the national plane from an unwillingness (or inability) to accept and understand available intelligence. We need not repeat such gross errors.

With little or no information of our own plans and resources, the intelligence officer can still tell the planner what resources the enemy can have at a future date and the general kinds of action he can initiate with them. If the commander and planner want to know what results the enemy can achieve with these resources and actions, the intelligence officer must have knowledge of his own resources and plans.

Applying this notion to the current situation, we can expect national intelligence officers to tell us what resources the Soviets will have for peripheral wars by 1959 without much guidance as to our own resources and national plans and policies. But they can tell us where and with what likelihood of success the Soviets can use those assets only if they know

the opposition which the Soviet action is likely to meet. Joint war-gaming would provide such interchange of information. It should make for a healthy interplay between intelligence and planning and probably result in improving both.

Estimating Enemy Intentions

25X1A In [REDACTED] paper we have a more restricted and therefore more specific subject for consideration. He objects to what he describes as "unrealistic resistance" to the use of intentions-analysis as opposed to capabilities-analysis in intelligence estimates. He holds that we need to consider both. By inference, he is most directly concerned with combat intelligence. He makes clear, however, that his conclusions apply to strategic intelligence as well.

25X1A After analyzing what [REDACTED] has to say, we can agree with his main thesis that both intentions and capabilities need to be considered. However, he has not hedged his proposal with essential safeguards and his arguments against the "capabilities doctrine" contain very serious weaknesses. We will review these arguments and then develop our own conclusions.

25X1A In order to evaluate [REDACTED] contentions, it is important that we have a common understanding of the meaning of "the capabilities doctrine." The burden of this concept is that in a combat intelligence estimate, the intelligence officer should present to the commander his best estimate of the enemy's capabilities rather than the enemy's intentions. The doctrine goes further: it holds that the commander in his estimate should consider each of the lines of action open to him in the light of each of the enemy capabilities in arriving at his final decision on a course of action. It is important to keep in mind that the doctrine has these two aspects: first, the intelligence officer is to determine capabilities; and second, the commander should make his decision only after considering all the capabilities.

An elaboration of this doctrine which is too often forgotten is that the G-2 is expected to give the commander his conclusion as to the relative probability of the exercise of any of the enemy capabilities, where there is evidence to support such a conclusion.*

Earlier doctrine had held that the task of the intelligence officer was to estimate the mission of the enemy and, from that, deduce the lines of action the enemy might take and then to determine their effect on the courses open to his own side. This doctrine invited a refined form of guessing as to the enemy mission and encouraged consideration of intentions in the deduction of enemy lines of action.

* FM 30-5.

The new capabilities doctrine was developed after World War I because it was felt that earlier doctrine introduced too much clairvoyance into military problem-solving (which is what decision-making really is), and that it came too near urging officers to guess the worst the enemy could do and to stake everything on that. It was believed that the "capabilities" system was more "scientific" and more nearly in accord with the facts of life. This conviction was illustrated at the Command and General Staff School, just before World War II, when one of the instructors "clinched" the argument in favor of basing estimates on capabilities by showing that in World War I von Kluck had changed his mind four times in one day and actually issued three different orders.

25X1A A concomitant of the acceptance of the capabilities doctrine has been the growth of an attitude that anyone who advocates basing estimates on enemy intentions just hasn't been brought up properly. To advocate the use of intentions-analysis has come to be considered the equal of advocating mind-reading or the use of a ouija board. Advocates of intentions-analysis like [REDACTED] object more to this anti-intentions prejudice than to the capabilities doctrine per se.

25X1A In marshaling support for the thesis that our doctrine needs review and, in particular, needs to give more consideration to intentions, the critics tend to make some amazing misinterpretations and to neglect some crucial facts. We agree that our doctrine needs recasting but we must, in fairness, keep the record accurate and logical.

[REDACTED] objection to current doctrine is based on three main points: first, "a nation or a commander must have a preponderance of force if he bases his decisions on capabilities alone;" second, "the resulting decision is always conservative;" and third, the enemy's potential capabilities are not adequately considered.* We will examine each of these points in some detail.

The statement that the capabilities doctrine is useable only when you have a preponderance of force is clearly erroneous. It is a very practicable doctrine when you are on the defensive and even when you are the hunted in a pursuit. To hold otherwise is like saying you cannot use the principles of arithmetic when you are in debt. The capabilities doctrine -- and, for that matter, any other doctrine -- gives you a discouraging picture in such cases, but that is the picture you must face. In an adverse

* The third point is paraphrased because the actual statement is not very precise. However, subsequent explanation makes clear that it means what has been said here.

situation, the doctrine is designed to indicate which line of action would have the least adverse result. In other words, it indicates the course of action which would get your nose least bloody.

The second criticism, that application of the doctrine generally results in conservative action, is to a large extent true; but it is true because, in matters of life and death, leaders generally tend to be conservative. Usually they should be. The criticism is justified only to the extent that the going doctrine makes it easier for leaders to be conservative. This is particularly true when officers take the view which an allegedly bright and "successful" officer (he later got a star) expressed when he said: "I teach my officers to select the line of action which gives them the best chance against what they figure is the enemy's most dangerous capability."

It is this use of the capabilities doctrine that brings on the criticism of conservatism. Actually it is a reversion to the older doctrine. It is, in fact, a form of intentions-analysis because the user assumes that the enemy will exercise a given capability. Such use does not condemn the doctrine itself, any more than the fact that some men get drunk justifies the condemnation of all whiskey. Current doctrine holds that the commander shall select the course of action which, in the face of all the estimated enemy capabilities, insures the most effective accomplishment of the mission. This is not the same thing as saying that he should select the one that gives the greatest certainty of accomplishing the mission. Clearly, the most certain course might be the most bloody while a slightly more risky line of action would be less costly and might accomplish the mission in a shorter time or have some other advantage. The selection of a line of action requires a balancing of costs and gains under the various possibilities. It also calls for what is known as "military character." No matter whether we use capabilities or intentions, the decisions will reflect that character.

The third argument is that use of the doctrine prevents consideration of potential capabilities, meaning those that develop between the time the estimate is made and the action takes place. This, of course, is woven of the very flimsiest cloth. The doctrine is based on the use of capabilities which the enemy will have at the time of the action for which one is planning -- not the capabilities at the time the decision is made. It is the capabilities forecast for the action-time. If one accepts the argument, he must also accept the conclusion that if intentions were used in the analysis, one could not use forecasts of intentions. On this score, then, one would be as badly off under one system as under the other.

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One other serious error in [REDACTED] paper that we must bring out is the failure to show that Army doctrine has for years made clear that in strategic intelligence -- as distinguished from combat intelligence -- both intentions and capabilities are considered. Official doctrine and

teaching at the Strategic Intelligence School and at Army schools have emphasized this point at least since World War II.

The Role of Intentions in Intelligence Estimates

So far we have been concerned with showing that the arguments presented against the capabilities doctrine are not very good or conclusive. This is not the same as saying that we are trying to build a case against intentions-analysis. Actually, we do not intend to do so. We will weasel but, we believe, with good reason. We agree that use should be made of both capabilities and intentions in developing estimates, but we hold that one must be equally objective and "scientific" in determining either of them.

Having noted that the common arguments against the capabilities concept are not too decisive let us note a few of the weaknesses of that system and indicate some of the strengths of the intentions approach.

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The faults of the capability system are two-fold. First it tends, as [REDACTED] points out, to cause intelligence officers to include remote possibilities as capabilities. They forget that the doctrine calls for the consideration of only those capabilities which bear on the accomplishment of one's own mission. Second, and despite strong language to the contrary in Army training, the doctrine seems to justify lazy intelligence officers to feel that they have done their bit when they have made one forecast of capabilities. This is most unfortunate. Intelligence officers must keep capabilities under continuing study to narrow them down. For example, in September of 1943 the predicted capabilities of the Germans vis-a-vis the Normandy landings were of a given order. As time went on, the Allies developed certain techniques and equipment and new forces became available. On the Axis side, Italy was knocked out of the war, and the Germans committed some of their forces in new areas. Consequently, the enemy capabilities changed continuously so that by June 1944 they were far more limited than could possibly have been predicted in September 1943. SHAEF intelligence kept a continuous spotlight on these capabilities during this period. So it should be in all operations. The good intelligence officer keeps on the ball as long as there is time to influence his own side's line of action. In many cases the situation develops so that at a point the enemy has only one capability. This happened at Falaise and in the Ruhr. Eventually, the Germans could no longer disengage their forces. They had to stay and fight. This idea was also illustrated in General Eisenhower's statement to the effect that after a given time he could no longer influence the course of a Juggernaut that became the Normandy assault. For a considerable period he had only one capability. Just how long the German G-2 was useful by keeping tabs on that has not been made clear. Our teaching does not emphasize this concept as clearly and firmly as it should.

- 57 -

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As we have already noted, World War I provided a startlingly effective case to bolster the capabilities doctrine. Similarly, the Civil War and World War II give us particularly fine cases for defense of intentions-analysis. In the Civil War, opposing commanders often knew each other personally. They used this knowledge in their planning. They knew the training, abilities, and personalities of their opponents and, hence, could determine the line of action the enemy was most likely to take. In a sense, of course, this too is an assessment of capabilities but there is no point in splitting any unnecessary hairs. In ordinary language, such an evaluation results in a prediction of intentions. There is a grey zone where capabilities slide into intentions, but for our purposes, we will lean to the conservative side and call the borderline cases intentions.

The World War II support for intentions-analysis is in some ways even stronger. It stems from the fact that the Japanese tendency to fight to the death was so effectively ingrained that, to a very marked degree, capabilities to take other lines of action were not meaningful. To a lesser extent this same situation applied in the European war where Hitlerism molded capabilities.

One can make a very good case for the contention that enemy intentions should properly be considered under the capabilities doctrine because they are a factor in the combat efficiency of the enemy. To accept such an interpretation without clearly labeling it, however, would simply be a way of getting around the intent of the doctrine and have the disadvantage of not calling intentions by their true name.

Experience in all walks of life shows clearly that a failure to make a thorough study of one's opponent to determine his motivations and his mental and psychological reactions as a basis for estimating his future action is worse than unwise. The press is full of stories that the USSR is very active in this field and has attained great successes, perhaps as a concomitant of progress in brain-washing and psychological matters generally. In our zeal to make sure that training will make commanders and intelligence officers "objective" and "scientific," we may have gone so far that we have tended to overlook the obvious. Certainly, the mental makeup and attitude of the enemy is as much a "fact" as is his training, his morale, his organization, or his weapons. Surely then it is logical to consider intentions. Equally surely, it is important to do so objectively and to know what you are doing. If you are an intelligence officer, it is most important that you alert your chief to the fact that you are considering intentions.

In the discussion so far we have used examples and applications in the purely military field. The conclusions are valid in national intelligence as well. In fact, intentions of a nation or a government can be determined with more accuracy than those of an individual commander. These

intentions are shaped by many clearly observable facts such as past actions, sociological conditions, cultural characteristics, internal political pressures, economic circumstances, and a host of others. The British exploited their understanding of German intentions in both World Wars and it was not uncommon to hear their intelligence officers use such expressions as: "the Hun is sure to -- -- -- --", and "the German probably appreciates." They personified the enemy government and high command. On the other hand, the Germans seem consistently to have missed the boat. They clearly either did not or could not evaluate US and Russian national intentions properly in either of the World Wars. The evaluation of national intentions involves a more comprehensive field of thought than does the evaluation of the intentions of an enemy commander. However, the task is no more difficult. Even if it is, it must be done because the rewards for success and the costs of failure are too great to permit neglecting the job.

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Where does all this get us? It seems to indicate that, as [REDACTED] says, a proper doctrine would be to include both capabilities and intentions in all estimates as we now do in the strategic estimate. However, we should expand the principle to include insurance that staff and command training will impress on all concerned that they need to apply the most rigid tests to all evidence bearing on intentions and that conclusions based upon them clearly show that this is the case.

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Since all concepts and doctrines wind up in a "form" of some sort, we might as well present a proposal on that score, too. In the military field the solution is easy. All we need to do in the commander's estimate* is to insert a paragraph on "enemy intentions." The intentions paragraph need be only a brief statement, either to the effect that there are no reliable indications of enemy intentions or that certain stated evidence indicates an intention to exercise one or more of these capabilities.

In the intelligence estimate, we need merely insert that "combat efficiency" includes knowledge of enemy personal characteristics which shape or have a major influence on his actions. In addition, we should add a paragraph on enemy intentions similar to the one suggested for the commander's estimate. This one should also present the critical evidence upon which the estimate of intentions is founded.

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Such a detailed analysis of combat intelligence doctrine is warranted at this juncture because, as Mr. [REDACTED] points out, so much of the concept and procedure of combat intelligence has found its way into the national

* FM 101-5

strategic intelligence process. The additions to military command and intelligence estimates which we have proposed here could be paralleled in our training for national strategic intelligence.

Our current doctrine probably goes too far in playing down intentions-analysis. Going all out the other way would certainly be worse. It would encourage clairvoyance and, in addition, might discourage the continuous effort to seek for new indications of capabilities. The stress on measurable physical facts is justified. While we are making important strides in understanding and measuring motivation and mental processes, we are not yet far enough along in that field to measure intentions as precisely as we can capabilities and, as [REDACTED] notes, the danger of deception is a very real one. Even so, since decision-making is so inevitably bound up with consideration of the personal element, it is the better part of discretion, and of valor as well, to consider intentions. They are so often the sparkplugs of human action.

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- 60 -

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SCIENTIFIC ESTIMATING *

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Those of us in the estimating business have a troublesome time with the problem of incorporating scientific or technical contributions into a finished estimate. To make the point, a hypothetical case relating to missiles and nuclear warheads is discussed below, but the example might as well be any complicated piece of military hardware or other technical subject.

Technical Possibility

An estimate on the advanced weapons program of Upper Volta is started. In the normal routine a contribution is asked from the Guided Missiles and Astronautics Intelligence Committee. In due course, the estimators receive a contribution which concludes that, on the basis of an examination of the evidence, "Upper Volta could have an IRBM system ready for production in 1967-68 and carry out deployment in 1968-69." The economists submit a contribution saying that, given a high enough priority, the economy of Upper Volta could support such a program. The political analysts find that Upper Volta thinks it has an urgent requirement for such a weapons system. So the estimate comes out saying that "Upper Volta could start deploying an IRBM system in 1968-69."

The Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee also submits a contribution, one on nuclear developments. Upper Volta has conducted a few atmospheric tests of nuclear devices, something is known of its general level of technical competence and production facilities; and so JAEIC states that warheads compatible with the IRBM's could be produced by the time GMAIC says the missiles could be ready for deployment. So the estimate adds to its sentence on deployment of the missiles the words "with compatible fission warheads." In the course of this exercise, what started out to

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer, 1965, pp. 7-11.

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** [REDACTED] is a member of the Board of National Estimates.

be very special statements of raw capabilities get transformed into USIB-approved estimates that have an aura of probability. While the word "could," in the estimating business, is understood to be purely a statement of possibility, the mere fact that the possibility is stated with no further qualification gives it something more of substance. The reader is apt to think, "if there is not a good chance that the possibility will be realized, why mention it?"

Hypothesis on Thin Ice

It is possible that the estimate could be handled with so much emphasis on its being a mere statement of potentialities that the reader would not be confused into taking it as having any significant element of probability. But it is doubtful if drafting could convey the tenuousness of the many technical components of the estimate. For instance, the estimate that Upper Volta could have compatible nuclear warheads involves in itself at least two estimates, each based on a number of subsidiary estimates. What is the maximum weight of the warheads -- including guidance, firing mechanism, etc. -- which the Upper Volta missile can carry? What is the likely actual weight of each of these components? What are the warhead's dimensions? It is highly unlikely that anyone can make more than crude guesses on these questions, even if we had seen a missile in the Army Day parade in Ougadougou.

Similarly, we probably know little about the probable size, weight, and shape of the nuclear component of the postulated warhead, how much fissionable material would be in it, its yield, or even its general design. Yet some hypotheses on all these questions underlay the estimate that a warhead compatible with the missile could be available. The estimators ask the technicians for opinions, and they oblige. Indeed, the estimators often ask for even more speculative data, as for the CEP and reliability of missiles. Comparable estimative problems arise in all technical subjects, e.g., capabilities for CW and BW, specifications for most kinds of complicated hardware such as aircraft, naval vessels, etc.

The intellectual philosophy of a scientist leads him to consider his scientific statements, however couched in language, as hypotheses -- the most satisfactory synthesis that he can make of the available data at hand. If and as evidence changes, he will adjust the hypothesis accordingly, or even abandon it, without any feeling that he is changing previously established truth. Estimative intelligence judgments are of a different kind, even though they are based in large part on analysis of the known facts. The intelligence estimator feels instinctively that he should state what he believes true, qualifying the estimate to indicate his qualms about its validity. When it turns out to have been wrong, even though it was the most reasonable one he could make on the basis of available evidence (as on the missiles in Cuba), he feels that he failed. The biological researcher is not

much upset when his hypothesis doesn't work out in laboratory tests, but the doctor is when the treatment he prescribes for his patient doesn't work and the patient dies. This analysis or analogy cannot be pressed too far, but it is part of the difference between scientific and intelligence estimating.

Worst-Casing

The scientist, in making an intelligence estimate, must have in mind the purpose for which he is making it -- as do all estimators. The temptation to estimate the "worst case" is just as strong with him as with anyone else. If U.S. security plans are to be made on the basis of his estimate, it seems better that they be based on the worst that is reasonably possible, not on hopes which may turn out to be false. This is not necessarily the phenomenon of "Pearl Harbor insurance," wherein one estimates the worst, secure in the knowledge that if his dire predictions do not turn out, no one will blame him for an unexpectedly favorable course of events. It is rather a judgment that when all hypotheses are shaky, the reader had best be prepared for the worst. In respect of other nations' weapons, this worst is often arrived at by taking the best skills, experience, and technology known to the estimator, discounting them by a relatively small factor, and coming out with an estimate of raw capability.

The non-technical estimator is at a great disadvantage in dealing with such technical contributions. He can be nowhere nearly as familiar with the evidence as the technician or as well equipped to deal with it. If he questions the hypothesis, he can often be silenced when his ignorance is pointed out. (This pointing out of his lack of competence to deal with technical subjects is most often done by people who serve on technical bodies but are at best amateur scientists. The vigor with which hypotheses are defended as truth often seems inversely proportional to the technical competence of the defender.) The non-technical inquirer can unearth, without too much prodding, the vast areas of uncertainty in our evidence on advanced weapons systems. But he is hard put to it to offer a more defensible judgment.

Taking into account what we know (which is little enough) about Upper Volta's experiments, technical and economic resources, and what we believe to be its national objectives, attributing to it a fair amount of the best technology we know (usually U.S. technology), and considering that it is better to over-warn the U.S. policy maker than to engender any degree of complacency by a judgment which cannot be documented, we thus come up with the estimate that "it is possible that Upper Volta could deploy IRBM's with nuclear warheads in three years."

Yet the estimator, technical or non-technical, feels in his bones that this worst case is highly unlikely. Does he estimate as above and add "but it might just as well be three or four years later, or even

longer?" This hardly looks as if he's earning his living. He is also affected by a conscious or unconscious desire to avoid the bias that if it took the United States ten years to develop an IRBM it will take those foreigners longer.

Ways Out

Does the calling in of a consulting panel help? In most cases it is doubtful. The two- or three-day panel has not kept up with the evidence, could not possibly have done so. Just the classification of much of the evidence precludes this. The panel is briefed by the technicians, who under the best of circumstances feed into the mechanism the same data which formed their own views. The panel has many of the same compulsions as the original technical group and is apt to produce some variation of the "worst case." The consultant does not have to act or budget on the basis of the judgments he makes, and while the government estimator doesn't either, he does feel a longer-term responsibility for his advice to the budgeter.

A formal intelligence estimate should whenever possible give a judgment as to the most likely contingency. The scientist often says that there is no basis for determining the most likely. The estimator is therefore in a dilemma for which there may be no solution. Perhaps such estimates can only be so clothed with caveats and qualifications as to make them seem ethereal, and certainly annoying to the reader who craves certainty. (Incidentally, the use of footnotes to call attention to uncertainties is of limited value. Especially when numerical tables are given, the footnote, usually in microscopic type, is easily overlooked or forgotten.)

Perhaps it should be the rule that the non-technical estimator ingest the scientific contribution, append it as an annex to his estimate, and present his layman's best judgment with all the deprecating language he can think of as to the difficulty of making confident estimates. This is what sometimes happens. But in most cases, those participating in the coordination meetings on an estimate include the technicians, professional and amateur alike, and the pressure they exert on the chairman of the coordinating group to accept the scientific contribution's language is great. The chairman can, and often does, retreat to a strict interpretation of "could," "possible," "might" and not try to fight the experts. In this process the reader is likely to be given an impression of probability and firmness which is not warranted.

THE ROLE OF THE CONSULTANT IN INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES *

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Most consultants, at one time or another in their careers wonder what excuse there is for their existence. They do not have continuing access to all the sources of information available to the intelligence community. They can spend only a few hours in pondering the significance of events which require days or weeks for proper analysis. Yet they are asked for advice about the most complicated problems and are expected to give their opinion on five minutes' notice. They wonder if the ritual of consultation has any more value than other forms of divination. They fear that they often seem naive and ignorant and they know that they can correct these deficiencies only by using up the time of intelligence officers who presumably have something better to do.

These feelings of guilt are made worse by the fact that the work is interesting and enjoyable. The problems are important, even if the consultant's opinion is not. However ignorant the consultant may be at the start of his career, he will find himself enlightened during his period of service. The intelligence community has not solved all its problems of style and organization but it usually succeeds in presenting essential facts in a clear, logical and compact form. There is no better way to get an education in world affairs than to act as a consultant. But these benefits only deepen the consultant's doubts. What does he give one-half so precious as what he receives?

For some kinds of consultant the answer is fairly easy. These are the men who have dined with dictators or haggled with desert sheikhs, who understand the mysteries of international finance or the intricacies of oriental politics. Such men have specialized knowledge and technical proficiency, they add to the pool of information and skill available to

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 2, No. 4, Fall, 1958, pp. 1-5.

25X1A ** For many years [REDACTED] has been a consultant to the Board of National Estimates.

the intelligence community instead of draining it. The need for this type of consultant is too obvious to require explanation; intelligence can always use expert knowledge of little-known areas or of highly technical problems.

But even these experts are often consulted on matters in which they have no special competence, and intelligence often recruits consultants who are not experts at all. They are ordinary, well-informed citizens, with some interest in foreign affairs. What special knowledge they may have is usually confined to Europe, an area on which practically everyone in Washington is an expert. It is to be hoped that they also have good sense and good judgment, but these qualities are certainly at least as common in the intelligence community as in any group of outsiders. What can such men contribute to the intelligence effort?

Since I belong to this group of consultants which has no particularly valuable expertise, my answer to this question may be somewhat self-serving. As far as I can see, the chief value of these consultants lies precisely in their lack of special knowledge. If nothing else, this makes them fairly representative of a large number of the consumers of intelligence products. Any text-book writer knows that it is fatal to ask an expert whether a particular chapter is clear and meaningful. Either he will read all his own knowledge into it and pass over loose organization and glaring omissions, or he will quarrel with every generalization and load it with unnecessary detail. The best critic of the first draft of a text-book is an intelligent person who has only a sophomore's knowledge in the field. In the same way, the best critic of an intelligence paper is probably the consultant who has only a general knowledge of the topic. If he misinterprets a key passage, if he is not convinced by the reasoning, if he feels that some essential information has been omitted, then the chances are that several consumers will have the same reactions.

For example, consultants have sometimes been troubled by the indiscriminate use of the terms "left" or "leftist." Since "leftist" can mean anything from a man who believes in universal suffrage to an ardent supporter of Communism it does not help very much to be told that the cabinet of country X has "four leftist members." Consultants have also been critical of the use of technical phrases in places where non-technical language would be just as effective. Why say "has optimum capability" when all that is meant is "works best?" The war against vagueness and jargon must be fought by all members of the intelligence community, but consultants can sometimes be used as shock troops in the struggle.

Lack of precision is not the only reason why a paper may fail to be convincing. Sometimes the argument seems too precise, it places too much weight on logic and reasonableness. Consultants may not be expert but they have usually had enough experience to realize that human

beings seldom solve their problems in a completely logical and sensible way. A nice example of this clash of logic and experience occurred a few years ago when the French Assembly was debating the ratification of the ill-fated EDC agreements. The first draft of a paper shown to a group of consultants predicted with some confidence that the agreements would be ratified. The arguments for this belief were strong. They were based on intensive investigation of the attitude of the government and the deputies and they were presented with impeccable logic. But some consultants distrusted the underlying assumption that the deputies would be reasonable and follow a policy of enlightened self-interest. They argued that these qualities are rare in any political group and especially in a French political group. Their opposition may have helped to make the final draft of the paper much less certain about ratification, even though it still leaned to the wrong side.

Criticism of style and logic is an essentially negative function. The consultant can also make some positive contributions. He should not hesitate to ask obvious and even silly questions. The greatest danger in intelligence work, as indeed in all intellectual activity, is that of falling into a repetitive routine. We all know of cases in which judgments have been repeated year after year simply because they were once sanctioned by the highest authority. It does no harm to reexamine what seems obvious or to question long-established generalizations. It was, I believe, a consultant who first queried the standard passage about the USSR being unwilling to conclude an Austrian State Treaty. It was another consultant who cast doubt on the cliché that Mohammedanism and Communism are fundamentally incompatible. On the other hand, certain consultants were demonstrably wrong when they urged that there was a real possibility that the USSR would withdraw from East Germany in return for a neutralization of the reunited country. But their question at least forced the intelligence community to examine with greater care its basic assumptions about Soviet policy in Germany and so in the end to have greater confidence in its estimate that the USSR considered it essential to retain its hold on East Germany.

Most important of all, the consultant, simply because he stands a little farther away from the trees, can sometimes see the first signs of the storms which will destroy certain portions of the forest. The intelligence community, like any other group, must assume that there will be a certain amount of continuity in the phenomena with which it deals. If it did not do so, it could not function. If precedents mean nothing, if what a statesman does today has no bearing on what he does tomorrow, then it becomes impossible to make estimates. Some of the most valuable intelligence papers ever written -- those projecting the future economic growth of the USSR -- were based on the assumption that existing trends would continue. But, granting all this, quantum jumps do occur in human affairs. Sudden changes can overthrow precedents and distort trends. It is hard for anyone to foresee such changes; it is particularly hard for men who have spent years watching a certain pattern of conduct emerge

and apparently stabilize itself. The worst failures of intelligence in recent years have been caused by this inability to anticipate the possibility of drastic change.

I am not suggesting that greater reliance on consultants could have prevented many, or indeed any, of these failures. Like most educated men, consultants tend to overestimate the element of continuity. But sometimes consultants do not know very well what it is that is supposed to continue. Because they have fewer old facts in their minds they are more receptive to the scattered new facts which indicate that a change is coming. I can remember two incidents which illustrate this point. The first came after the death of Stalin. Certainly no one could then have predicted the exact nature of the changes which would occur. But there was a tendency on the part of some members of the intelligence community to deny that any change would take place. Certain consultants, on the other hand -- mostly those who knew little about the Soviet Union -- felt that drastic change was inevitable, that no one but Stalin could continue Stalin's system. Their arguments may have been weak, but their hunch was right. A little more willingness to look for signs of change in the months following Stalin's death might have prevented some poor estimates.

The other case was more recent. When the Gaillard government fell in France early this year, the generally accepted opinion was that this was merely another episode in the lamentable history of the Fourth Republic. Another weak government would be formed, which would limp along until replaced by an even weaker successor. Some consultants, however, felt that this was the last straw, that the French would no longer tolerate a system which made them politically impotent. In spite of their counsel, the possibility of a Gaullist regime was still being denied by some elements of the intelligence community almost up to the moment when de Gaulle took power.

One final moral: on both occasion the consultants deferred to the greater knowledge of the experts whom they were advising and did not press their point of view very strongly. This was an abnegation of their proper function. Dissent leads to questioning of established opinion, and only through questioning established opinion can we arrive at the imperfect knowledge which is all that intelligence can ever attain.

WORDS OF ESTIMATIVE PROBABILITY *

Sherman Kent **

The briefing officer was reporting a photo reconnaissance mission.¹ Pointing to the map, he made three statements:

1. "And at this location there is a new airfield. (He could have located it to the second on a larger map.) Its longest runway is 10,000 feet."
2. "It is almost certainly a military airfield."
3. "The terrain is such that the Blanks could easily lengthen the runways, otherwise improve the facilities, and incorporate this field into their system of strategic staging bases. It is possible that they will." Or, more daringly, "It would be logical for them to do this and sooner or later they probably will."

The above are typical of three kinds of statements which populate the literature of all substantive intelligence. The first is as close as one can come to a statement of indisputable fact. It describes something knowable and known with a high degree of certainty. The reconnaissance aircraft's position was known with precision and its camera reproduced almost exactly what was there.

Estimative Uncertainty

The second is a judgment or estimate. It describes something which is knowable in terms of the human understanding but not precisely known by the man who is talking about it. There is strong evidence to sustain his judgment: the only aircraft on the field are military aircraft, many are parked in revetted hard-stands, the support area has all the characteristics of similar known military installations, and so on. Convincing

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 8, No. 4, Fall, 1964, pp. 49-65.

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¹ This particular briefing officer was not the photo-interpreter.

as it is, this evidence is circumstantial. It makes the case, say, 90 percent of the way. And some sort of verbal qualifer is necessary to show that the case is a 90-percenter, not a 100. This is why the briefer said "almost certainly."

The third statement is another judgment or estimate, this one made almost without any evidence direct or indirect. It may be an estimate of something that no man alive can know, for the Blanks may not yet have made up their minds whether to lengthen the runways and build up the base. Still the logic of the situation as it appears to the briefer permits him to launch himself into the area of the literally unknowable and make this estimate. He can use possible to indicate that runway extension is neither certain nor impossible, or he can be bolder and use probably to designate more precisely a degree of liklihood, a lower one than he had attached to his estimate regarding the character of the airfield.

Generally speaking, the most important passages of the literature of substantive intelligence contain far more statements of the estimative types two and three than of the factual type one. This is the case because many of the things you most wish to know about the other man are the secrets of state he guards most jealously. To the extent his security measures work, to that extent your knowledge must be imperfect and your statements accordingly qualified by designators of your uncertainty. Simple prudence requires the qualifier in any type-three statement to show a decent reticence before the unknowable.

Concern over these qualifiers is most characteristic of that part of the intelligence production business known as estimates. This is no small recondite compartment; it extends to almost every corner of all intelligence research work, from the short appraisals or comments of a reports officer to the full-dress research study of the political or economic analyst. Practically all substantive intelligence people constantly make estimates. The remarks that follow are generally addressed to all these people and their readers, but most especially are they addressed to that particular institution of the estimating business known as the National Intelligence Estimate and its audience.

The NIE, taking into account the high echelon of its initiators, producers, and consumers, should be the community's best effort to deal with the relevant evidence imaginatively and judiciously. It should set forth the community's findings in such a way as to make clear to the reader what is certain knowledge and what is reasoned judgment, and within this large realm of judgment what varying degrees of certitude lie behind each key statement. Ideally, once the community has made up its mind in this matter, it should be able to choose a word or a phrase which quite accurately describes the degree of its certainty; and ideally, exactly this message should get through to the reader.

- 70 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

It should not come as a surprise that the fact is far from the ideal, that considerable difficulty attends both the fitting of a phrase to the estimators' meaning and the extracting of that meaning by the consumer. Indeed, from the vantage point of almost fourteen years of experience, the difficulties seem practically insurmountable. The why and wherefore of this particular area of semantics is the subject of this essay.

Let me begin with a bit of history.²

Early Brush with Ambiguity

In March 1951 appeared NIE 20-51, "Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951." The following was its key judgment, made in the final paragraph of the Conclusions: "Although it is impossible to determine which course the Kremlin is likely to adopt, we believe that the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations indicates that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 should be considered a serious possibility." (Emphasis added.) Clearly this statement is either of type two, a knowable thing of which our knowledge was very imperfect, or of type three, a thing literally unknowable for the reason that the Soviets themselves had not yet reached a binding decision. Whichever it was, our duty was to look hard at the situation, decide how likely or unlikely an attack might be, and having reached that decision, draft some language that would convey to the reader our exact judgment.

The process of producing NIEs then was almost identical to what it is today. This means that a draft had been prepared in the Office of National Estimates on the basis of written contributions from the IAC³ agencies, that a score or so of Soviet, Satellite, and Yugoslav experts from the intelligence community labored over it, and that an all but final text presided over by the Board of National Estimates had gone to the Intelligence Advisory Committee. There the IAC members, with the DCI in the chair, gave it its final review, revision, and approval.

As is quite obvious from the sentence quoted above, Soviet and Satellite intentions with respect to Yugoslavia were a matter of grave concern in the high policy echelons of our government. The State Department's Policy Planning Staff was probably the most important group seized of the problem.

² Harry H. Ransom's Central Intelligence and National Security (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) carries on pp. 196-7 a bob-tailed and somewhat garbled version of it.

³ Intelligence Advisory Committee, USIB's predecessor.

Its chairman and members read NIE 29-51 with the sort of concentration intelligence producers can only hope their product will command.

A few days after the estimate appeared, I was in informal conversation with the Policy Planning Staff's chairman. We spoke of Yugoslavia and the estimate. Suddenly he said, "By the way, what did you people mean by the expression 'serious possibility'? What kind of odds did you have in mind?" I told him that my personal estimate was on the dark side, namely that the odds were around 65 to 35 in favor of an attack. He was somewhat jolted by this; he and his colleagues had read "serious possibility" to mean odds very considerably lower. Understandably troubled by this want of communication, I began asking my own colleagues on the Board of National Estimates what odds they had had in mind when they agreed to that wording. It was another jolt to find that each Board member had had somewhat different odds in mind and the low man was thinking of about 20 to 80, the high of 80 to 20. The rest ranged in between.

25X1A

Of my colleagues on the Board at least one -- maybe more -- shared my concern. My most obvious co-worrier was [REDACTED]. He and I were shaken perhaps more by the realization that Board members who had worked over the estimate had failed to communicate with each other than by the Board's failure to communicate with its audience. This NIE was, after all, the twenty-ninth that had appeared since General Smith had established the Office of National Estimates. Had Board members been seeming to agree on five month's worth of estimative judgments with no real agreement at all? Was this the case with all others who participated -- ONE staffers and IAC representatives, and even IAC members themselves? Were the NIEs dotted with "serious possibilities" and other expressions that meant very different things to both producers and readers? What were we really trying to say when we wrote a sentence such as this?

What we were trying to do was just what my Policy Planning friend had assumed, namely to quote odds on this or that being the case or taking place in the future. There is a language for odds; in fact there are two -- the precise mathematical language of the actuary or the race track bookie and a less precise though useful verbal equivalent. We did not use the numbers, however, and it appeared that we were misusing the words.

25X1A



The No-Odds Possible

25X1A

Our gross error in the Yugoslav estimate, and perhaps in its predecessors, lay in our not having fully understood this particular part of our task. As [REDACTED] and I saw it the substantive stuff we had been dealing with had about it certain elements of dead certainty: Stalin was in charge in the USSR, for example. These, if relevant, we stated affirmatively or used impliedly as fact. There were also elements of sheer impossibility (Yugoslavia was not going to crack off along its borders and disappear physically from the face of the earth); these we did not bother to state at all. In between these matters of certainty and impossibility lay the large area of the possible. With respect to the elements herein we could perceive some that were more likely to happen than not, some less likely. These were the elements upon which we could make an estimate, choosing some word or phrase to convey our judgment that the odds were such and such for or against something coming to pass.

At the race track one might say:

There are ten horses in the starting gate. It is possible that any one of them will win -- even the one with three legs.

But the odds (or chances) against the three-legger are overwhelming.

Here, as in estimating Yugoslav developments, there is evidence to justify the citing of odds. But in the world that intelligence estimates try hardest to penetrate -- a world of closed covenants secretly arrived at, of all but impenetrable security, of skillfully planned deceptions, and so on -- such evidence is by no means invariably at hand. In a multitude of the most important circumstances -- situations you are duty bound to consider and report on -- about all you can say is that such and such is neither certain to happen nor is its happening an impossibility. The short and proper way out is to say that its happening is possible and stop there without any expression of odds. If you reserve the use of "possible" for this special purpose -- to signal something of high importance whose chances of being or happening you cannot estimate with greater precision -- hopefully you will alert your reader to some necessary contingency planning. (You may not if you have dulled him by citing a lot of "possibles" of little real consequence.)

If our gross error lay in not perceiving the correctness -- or at any rate the utility -- of the above formulation, our particular error lay in using the word "possibility" with the modifier "serious." Foster and I felt that it was going to be difficult enough for the estimators to communicate a sense of odds even if they stuck to a fairly rigorous vocabulary; it was going to be impossible if the vocabulary were permitted to become as sloppily imprecise as in normal speech. We had to have a

way of differentiating between those possible things about which we could make a statement of likelihood and the other possible things about which we could not. The first cardinal rule to emerge was thus, "The word 'possible' (and its cognates ^{5/}) must not be modified." The urge to drop into ordinary usage and write "just possible," "barely possible," "a distinct (or good) possibility," and so must be suppressed. The whole concept of "possibility" as here developed must stand naked of verbal modifiers. ⁶

An Odds Table

25X1A

Once [redacted] and I had decided upon this first cardinal rule we turned to the elements where likelihood could be estimated. We began to think in terms of a chart which would show the mathematical odds equivalent to words and phrases of probability. Our starter was a pretty complicated affair. We approached its construction from the wrong end. Namely we began with 11 words or phrases which seemed to convey a feeling of 11 different orders of probability and then attached numerical odds to them. At once we perceived our folly. In the first place, given the inexactness of the intelligence data we were working with, the distinctions we made between one set of odds and its fellows above and below were unjustifiably sharp. And second, even if in rare cases you could arrive at such exact mathematical odds, the verbal equivalent could not possibly convey that exactness. The laudable precision would be lost on the reader.

⁵ See page 59.

⁶ This usage is wholly in accord with the findings of the lexicographers, who almost invariably assign it the number one position. Further it is readily understood and generally employed by statisticians, scientists, and the like, who sometimes define it as "non-zero probability." This is much to my taste.

At the same time there can be no question of the existence of a second usage, especially in the ordinary spoken word. This meaning here is most emphatically not the broad range of "non-zero probability," but a variable low order of probability, say anywhere below 40 or 30 or 20 percent. Thus it would fall last in a series that named descending odds: certain, probable, possible. When people use it to signify very low odds, for example below 5 percent, they may say "remotely possible" or any of its many cognates. This of course is not to my liking, but the intended meaning is clear. The serious trouble comes when another group of users lifts the word out of its position in the cellar of odds and by the addition of augmenting adjectives makes it do duty upstairs: "serious possibility," "great possibility," "highly possible."

So we tried again, this time with only five gradations, and beginning with the numerical odds. The chart which emerged can be set down in its classical simplicity thus:

100% Certainty		
The General	93%, give or take about 6%	Almost certain
Area of	75%, give or take about 12%	Probable
Possibility	50%, give or take about 10%	Chances about even
	30%, give or take about 10%	Probably not
	7%, give or take about 5%	Almost certainly not
0% Impossibility		

Important note to consumers: You should be quite clear that when we say "such and such is unlikely" we mean that the chances of its NOT happening are in our judgment about three to one. Another, and to you critically important, way of saying the same thing is that the chances of its HAPPENING are about one in four. Thus if we were to write,



25X1C

We had some charts run up and had some discussions in the community. There were those who thought the concept and the chart a very fine thing. A retired intelligence professional thought well enough of it to put it into a book.⁷ CIA officers, addressing War College

⁷ Washington Platt, Strategic Intelligence Production (N.Y., 1957). The chart appears on the inside cover and again on page 208 -- not exactly as above but in full accord with my principles. The trouble comes on pp. 209-210, where General Platt departs widely, and to me regrettably, from my notion of legitimate synonyms.

- 75 -

C-O-N-F-I-T-E-N-T-I-A-L

audiences and the like, would sometimes flash a slide and talk about it. A few copies got pasted on the walls of estimates offices in the community. Some people were sufficiently taken that they advocated putting it on the inside back cover of every NIE as a sort of sure-fire handy glossary.

There were also those who did not think about the idea at all, and others in opposition to it. Some fairly important people who had a professional stake in this kind of thinking never took the trouble to learn what it was all about. A good many did take a little trouble and laughed. Still a third group found out all they needed to know and attacked the whole proposition from a hard semantic base point. Of these more later.

25X1A In the face of this inertia and opposition and with the early departure of my only solid ally, [REDACTED] I began backing away from bold forward positions. I did continue harassing actions and in the course of making a nuisance of myself to associates and colleagues did pick up some useful converts, but I dropped all thought of getting an agreed air-tight vocabulary of estimative expressions, let alone reproducing the chart in the rear of every NIE. With the passage of time it has appeared that the guerrilla strategy thrust upon me by circumstance was the only one holding any chance of success. In almost fourteen years this article is my first serious and systematic attempt to get the message across, and it probably would not have been written if [REDACTED] had not consulted me about his foray into the same semantic problem.

25X1A

The Aesthetic Opposition

What slowed me up in the first instance was the firm and reasoned resistance of some of my colleagues. Quite figuratively I am going to call them the "poets" -- as opposed to the "mathematicians" -- in my circle of associates, and if the term conveys a modicum of disapprobation on my part, that is what I want it to do. Their attitude toward the problem of communication seems to be fundamentally defeatist. They appear to believe the most a writer can achieve when working in a speculative area of human affairs is communication in only the broadest general sense. If he gets the wrong message across or no message at all -- well, that is life.

Perhaps I overstate the poets' defeatism. In any case at least one of them feels quite strongly that my brief for the "mathematicians" is pretty much nonsense. He has said that my likening my side to the mathematician's is a phoney; that I am in fact one with the sociologists who try by artificial definitions to give language a bogus precision. He has gone on to stress the function of rhetoric and its importance. And he has been at some pains to point out how

- 76 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

handy it would be to use expressions like "just possible," "may well," and "doubtless" as they are loosely used in conversation. Could there not be an occasional relaxation of the rule?

Suppose one wrote a sentence: "Khrushchev may well have had in the back of his mind such and such, or indeed it is distinctly possible that somebody had just primed him..." Now suppose you delete the "well" and the "distinctly;" has anything been lost? There will be those who point out that "may well" and "distinctly possible" do convey a flavor which is missing without them. Of course the flavor in question is the flavor of odds, communicated without quoting them. The poets would probably argue that in a sentence of this sort the introduction of any of the terms for particular odds would make the writer look silly. Everybody knows that you could not have the evidence to sustain the use of, say, "probably" in these two instances. Hence you can only suggest odds by the use of the "may well" and "distinctly possible" and so say something without saying it, in short fudge it. The poets wounded when urged to delete the whole ambiguous sentence, arguing that this serves only to impoverish the product. They grow impatient when you advocate dropping only the "well" and the "distinctly." And as for your accusation of fudging, they generally counterattack, inviting you to write something that fudges nothing.

There is a point which the poets can make with telling effect. It is that there are probably just as many reading poets as there are writing poets, and these are going to be numb to the intended meaning of the "mathematician" writer. If you write to give no more than just the general idea or general feel you may get through with great success. Per contra, if you break your heart in an endeavor to make yourself fully precisely understood, you may not. I realize the truth in the above; I am not reconciled to it; I deplore it.

The Growth of Variants

Even if there had been no poets it would have been an impractical idea to print a chart on the inside of the back page of each NIE as a sort of glossary. To have used the one on page 55 and stuck to these words exclusively would have imposed intolerable restraints upon the prose. Even if it had been desirable it would have been impossible to enforce such rigidity. But this was really never at issue: from the start a number of perfectly legitimate synonyms for the concept of possibility and a number for each of the five orders

- 77 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

of likelihood were generally recognized.⁸

For example:

	conceivable
	could 10
Possible 9	may
	might
	perhaps 11

⁸ Some of these synonymous meanings are expressed in verb forms. Thus it is syntactically possible to use them closely coupled to one of the adverbial expressions of odds, e.g., "we believe it likely that ..." or "we estimate it is almost certain that such and such will not ..." If we really mean to assign an odds value to these verb forms good usage would forbid this kind of doubling-up. Mathematically, the probabilities would have to undergo a quite ridiculous multiplication. Thus "we believe" (75⁺ percent) multiplied by "likely" (75⁺ percent) would yield odds worse than 3 to 2 instead of 3 to 1. If we are not assigning an odds value to "we believe" and "we estimate" the purist would say we should not use them. Yet on many occasions a writer will feel uncomfortable -- and justifiably so -- with a bare "It is likely that ..." Such a bald statement is seemingly more confident than the situation would warrant. The writer will feel something akin to a compulsion towards modesty and a drive to soften the "likely" by introducing it with a "we believe" or "we estimate." Almost invariably he does not intend to change the odds with "likely." If one could set himself up as the arbiter, one would, I believe, rule that the "likely," of odds and that its message was unaffected by the introducing verb.

Doubling up in the "possibly" category is a different matter. We should avoid "it might (or may) be possible for the Blanks to ..." The verb should be present or future indicative, normally "is" and "will be."

⁹ These synonyms must not be modified; might well, could well, just could, barely conceivable, etc. are as inadmissible as the original sin.

¹⁰ "Could" is included here because of many years' duty as a synonym for "possible." It has also served as a short way of noting a capability as in "The Soviets could develop / for "have the capability to develop" / such and such a radar though we have no evidence that they are doing so." The two usages are close, to be sure, but not identical.

¹¹ As in, "It is almost certain that such and such will occur in the delta, perhaps in Saigon itself."

	virtually certain
	all but certain
Almost certain	highly probable
	highly likely
	odds [or chances] overwhelming
	likely
	we believe
Probable	we estimate
	chances about even
50-50	chances a little better [or less] than even
	improbable
	unlikely
Probably not ¹²	we believe that ... not
	we estimate that ... not
	we doubt, doubtful
	almost impossible
Almost certainly not	virtually impossible
	some slight chance
	highly doubtful

If the chart were expanded to take care of these, it probably would not fit on the inside back cover of the NIE, and even if it could be made to, its complexity would probably exasperate gentle reader more than it would edify him. Still worse, he would be confused by changes that would have to be made in it from time to time, always to accommodate newcomers among the accepted expressions.

The table of synonyms above did not come into being all at once; it has grown to its present size by accretion. "We believe" came in rather early, and as I remember via General Smith himself. "We

¹² This group of words poses at least one very vexing problem. Suppose you wish to make a positive estimate that there is, say, about a 30-percent chance that such and such thing is the case. Assuming that the thing in question is important, a 30-percent chance of its being the case is highly significant. If you stick with the chart and write "it is improbable [or unlikely etc.] that such and such is the case" you will probably convey a much more negative attitude than you intend. There are many ways around the problem; they will, however, require a few more words.

estimate" was a bit later; "we think," "we expect," and "we judge" are part way in.¹³ If they make it all the way I trust they will be used and understood in the "probably"/"we believe" bracket. "We doubt" has been accepted within the last few years as a legitimate equivalent of "probably not." There will be others -- I sincerely hope not very many. Keeping them out will take some doing. In the past, whatever the rigor insisted upon at the working and drafting level, who was there to tell a General Smith or a Mr. Dulles, as he presided over the IAC or USIB, that the revision he had just written out on a piece of yellow paper was not permissible?

Consistency in Usage

From my remarks about the poets, it should be clear that my sympathies lie with their mathematical opponents. But we mathematically-inclined are ourselves not in good array. You might almost say that some of us are talking in the decimal, others in the binary, and still others in the root five or seven systems.

For example, consider the letter-number device which has been standard with attache' and other reporting services, A-2, C-3, F-6, etc. The numbers 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 designating the quality of a report's content stand for, respectively: (1) confirmed by other independent or reliable sources; (2) probably true; (3) possibly true; (4) doubtful; (5) probably false; and (6) cannot be judged. Note that the number 3, "possibly true," is in the middle of the scale of odds, doing the duty I have hoped it should never be asked to do.

Or consider the findings of a distinguished intelligence research project. The object was to identify certain military units with respect to the chances of their existence or non-existence. One group of units was called "firm," another "highly probable," a third "probable," and a fourth general group "possible." Except for one important thing, this kind of ordering was wholly to my taste. The word "firm" was unfortunately not used, as one might expect, to describe a condition of 100 percent certainty. Its begetters, upon cross-examination, owned that it was meant to indicate something like 90-95 percent -- roughly the equivalent of my "almost certain." This usage puts the lower categories slightly askew from the terminology of my chart -- "highly probable" and "probable" to my "chances better than even." "Possible," however, was used exactly as I have felt it should be used, to designate something in the range of chances between the absolute barriers of "certainty" and "impossibility" to which no numerical odds could be assigned.

¹³ "We anticipate," used regrettably as a synonym for "we expect," is also part way in. I hope it gets out.

There are other heresies among the mathematicians, if they can be so proclaimed. For example, look at the way in which photo-interpreters have defined their key evaluative words:

Suspect -- Evidence is insufficient to permit designation of a function with any degree of certainty, but photography or other information provides some indications of what the function may be.

Possible -- Evidence indicates that the designated function is reasonable and more likely than other functions considered.

Probable -- Evidence for the designated function is strong and other functions appear quite doubtful.

This kind of formulation shows that someone -- probably a number of people -- had spent a good amount of time striving for a set of rigorous definitions. If you pause long enough to realize that the photo-interpreter's first problem is identification and then take a hard look at his word "suspect," you will see that it parallels my usage for "possible." But the P/Is have preempted "possible" for other duty. Their "possible" fits nicely into the slot of "probable" in my scale of values and their "probable" into my "almost certain."

We are in disarray.

To Estimate or Not

The green language of ordinary conversation abounds with estimates given lightly and with a high order of confidence: "You're a shoo-in," "Not a Chinaman's chance," "A million to one." When you hear one of these expressions or read its more decorous counterpart you may realize that the matter at issue and the related judgment required little soul-searching on the part of the estimator. In the intelligence business, too, there are many occasions when the obscurities of the unknown are easily pierced and we can launch an estimative "probably" or an "almost certainly not" with speed and conviction.

There are, however, estimates at the other end of the spectrum -- estimates which are patently impossible to make. The green language is equally rich in coping with these: "Search me," "I wouldn't have the foggiest," "Your guess is as good as mine," and so on.

It is unfortunate that intelligence estimators are not allowed this kind of freedom in brushing off requests for estimates of the totally impenetrable. Some way or another a convention has been established by which we may not write the sentence: "It is impossible to estimate such and such." If we

try this maneuver our masters will often rudely ask, "Why can't you; what are you paid for, anyway?" If they do not bludgeon us thus, they employ a combination of blackmail and flattery before which even the most righteous among us are likely to fall. The play goes like this: "You say you cannot estimate the number, type, and performance characteristics of Chinese Communist long-range missiles for mid-1970. This is data which is absolutely essential for my planning. Obviously no one expects you to be wholly accurate or very confident of your findings. But you people are after all the experts, and it would be too bad if I had to go to others for this stuff who know far less about it than you. And that is exactly what I will do if you refuse my request."

At this point we do not invite our would-be consumer to seek out his own crystal ball team. We accept his charge, but with grave reservations. Sometimes we try to stay honest by introducing contingencies. "This will probably continue to be the case but only if ..., if ..., and if" Then without closing out the contingencies with firm estimates (which we are plainly unable to make) we merely talk about "ifs." hoping that he will keep them in mind as time unfolds and that when sufficient returns are in he will himself make the estimate or ask us to have a second look.

At other times again, when it is the whole subject rather than one of its parts that cannot be estimated, we meet the impossible frontally. We scrupulously avoid the word "estimate" in describing the document and its findings. Rather, we proclaim these to be intelligence assumptions for planning. In our opening paragraphs we are likely to be quite specific as to where our evidence begins and ends, how we are speculating about quantities of things that the other man may produce without knowing whether he has yet made the decision to produce so many as one. We acknowledge our use of the crutch of U.S. analogy, and so on. We promise to speak, not in discrete figures, but in ranges of figures and ranges of our uncertainty regarding them.

Some years back we were obliged by force majeure to compose some tables setting forth how the Blanks might divide up an all-but-undreamed-of stockpile of fissionable material among an as-yet-unborn family of weapons. There were of course the appropriate passages of verbal warning, and then, on the chance that the numerical tables should become physically separated from the warning, the tables were over printed in red. "This table is based on assumptions stated in Moreover, it should not be used for any purpose whatever without inclusion, in full, of the cautionary material in" More recently we have issued a document which not only began with a fulsome caveat but was set off by a format and color of paper that were new departures.

The Lurking Weasel

Unhappily, making the easy estimate is not the commonplace of our trade; making the impossible one is happily equally rare. What is the commonplace is the difficult but not impossible estimate. And how we, along with all humanity, hate the task! How fertile the human mind in devising ways of delaying if not avoiding the moment of decision! How rich the spoken language in its vocabulary of issue-ducking! "I have a sneaker that ...," "I'd drop dead of surprise if ..." -- expressions with sound but upon reflection almost without meaning. How much conviction, for example, do you have to have before you become possessed of a sneaker; how much of the unexpected does it take to cause your heart to fail?

Even the well-disciplined intelligence brotherhood similarly quails before the difficult but not impossible estimate and all too often resorts to an expression of avoidance drawn from a more elegant lexicon. What we consciously or subconsciously seek is an expression which conveys a definite meaning but at the same time either absolves us completely of the responsibility or makes the estimate at enough removes from ourselves as not to implicate us. The "serious / or distinct / possibility" clan of expressions is a case in point.

Look at our use of "apparently" and "seemingly" and the verbal "appears" and "seems." We, the writers, are not the unique beings to whom such and such "appears" or "seems" to be the case; with these words we have become everybody or nobody at all. So also with "suggests" and "indicates." Perhaps the "to us" is implicit, but we do not so state; and far more importantly, we practically never say why our suggestibilities were aroused or assess the weight of the reason that aroused them. So still again with "presumably," "ostensibly," and -- most serious of all -- "reportedly" otherwise unmodified. The latter taken literally and by itself carries no evaluative weight whatsoever, and who should know this better than we ourselves who each day handle scores of "reports" whose credibility runs up and down the scale between almost certain truth and almost certain nonsense. It is a pleasure to report -- authoritatively -- that you will find very few unmodified "reportedlys" in the NIEs.

We say "the Soviets probably fear that such and such action will cause thus and so." What I think we mean is "The Soviets probably estimate that if they do such and such the reaction will be disadvantageous to them." If we say "they probably hope ..." we mean roughly the opposite. We talk of another country's willingness "to risk such and such." This is a shorthand, and probably an unconscious one, for the country's having estimated the odds against the unwanted thing's happening as well as how unacceptable the unwanted thing would be if it occurred. Its "risking the danger" removes the critical judgment a step or two from our personal responsibility.

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Words and expressions like these are far too much a part of us and our habits of communication to be banned by fiat. No matter what is said of their impreciseness or of the timidity of soul that attends their use, they will continue to play an important part in written expression. If use them we must in NIEs, let us try to use them sparingly and in places where they are least likely to obscure the thrust of our key estimative passages.

Here may I return to the group to which I have especially addressed the foregoing -- the brotherhood of the NIE. Let us meet these key estimates head on. Let us isolate and seize upon exactly the thing that needs estimating. Let us endeavor to make clear to the reader that the passage in question is of critical importance -- the gut estimate, as we call it among ourselves. Let us talk of it in terms of odds or chances, and when we have made our best judgment let us assign it a word or phrase that is chosen from one of the five rough categories of likelihood on the chart. Let the judgment be unmistakable and let it be unmistakably ours.

If the matter is important and cannot be assigned an order of likelihood, but is plainly something which is neither certain to come about nor impossible, let us use the word "possible" or one of its stand-ins -- and with no modifier.

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IS INTELLIGENCE OVER-COORDINATED? *

Ray S. Cline **

Being in favor of coordination in the US intelligence community has come to be like being against sin; everyone lines up on the right side of the question. In fact, coordination has become what [REDACTED] calls an "OK" word -- one which defies precise definition but sounds good and brings prestige to the user. Now I do not want to deny that coordination is a good thing, but I would like to suggest that there can be too much of a good thing. I am afraid the intelligence community is suffering from over-coordination.

Part of the trouble is that few who are zealous for coordination stop to define what it is. In one sense -- unfortunately not always understood -- coordination is the main business of the Director of Central Intelligence. The public law creating CIA establishes as its purpose "coordinating the intelligence activities" of the departments and agencies of the US Government, including the intelligence components of State, Army, Navy, and Air.

I am sure that in the absence of any technical definition by Congress the public statute employed the word "coordinate" in its normal Webster's - dictionary meaning of "to regulate and combine in harmonious action." This kind of coordination is essential; I doubt that we have enough of it.

In the intelligence community, unfortunately, the "activity" that has been coordinated tirelessly has not been the operational conduct of business or the analytical procedures followed by the intelligence agencies, which the language of the law would imply to a layman, but purely their verbal product in the form of written reports and estimates. Regardless of how inharmoniously the intelligence agencies may engage in "action," they have all settled down to coordination in the

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 1, No. 4, Fall, 1957, pp. 11-18.

** Mr. Cline was formerly Deputy Director for Intelligence.

sense of prolonged and detailed joint examination of the words issuing forth from the national intelligence machinery. The apparent objective is to insure that every agency approves of all the language formulations employed in intelligence estimates.

Because coordination is felt to be automatically a good thing, the long and difficult path to unanimity on wording is pursued without regard for the time wasted or ideas lost. The search for the happy cliché, acceptable to all, shopworn but durable, frequently ambiguous but always defensible, goes endlessly on. It is this particular "coordination" process that is in a fair way of becoming a millstone around the neck of the Washington intelligence community.

It is ironic that the word "coordination" came into the government lexicon as the harbinger of a liberalizing and energizing influence at work in a ponderous bureaucratic machine. "Coordination" was the term hit upon by the Army to describe a system of staff consultation devised shortly before World War II in order to escape from the hidebound staff "concurrence" system then saddling the War Department General Staff with an almost unworkable consultative procedure. Under this post-World War I system, any Assistant Chief of Staff of the War Department General Staff was obliged to get the "concurrence" of the other Assistant Chiefs of Staff on any action affecting their mutual interests, whether the interests of the other Assistant Chiefs of Staff were of major or minor importance.

The difficulty of getting a fully concurred memorandum through the War Department General Staff in the emergency years of the late 1930's was so great that the more energetic staff officers began to despair of ever being ready or able to fight World War II. It was in this atmosphere that the coordination system developed and the formal concurrence concept was discarded.

The new procedure presumed that the officer proposing action was -- on behalf of his Staff Division -- entirely responsible for presenting information and making recommendations. He was obliged to show his study and proposals to appropriate officers in other Staff Divisions with overlapping interests to insure that they had no reasonable grounds, deriving from other actions they were taking, for dissenting from the proposed action. The ultimate objective was "harmonious action" and prompt decision. Quibbling over phrases and details became unpopular under the pressure of the need for speed.

The result was that officers consulted in this informal fashion could initial a paper as having been "coordinated" with them without feeling that they were taking full responsibility for the phrasing of the study or the recommended course of action. Coordination merely proved that

- 95 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

officers legitimately concerned had seen the paper and had interposed no objection that dissuaded the action officer from proceeding.

This War Department General Staff coordination system was so successful in World War II that it became a matter of doctrine. In the armed services it became a truism that a paper not carefully "coordinated" was not a good staff paper. There is much to be said for this point of view, and this kind of coordination is surely the responsibility legally placed on CIA in intelligence matters -- that is, the obligation to consult and discover the views of other interested parties in order to insure "harmonious action." I wish it carried with it the original connotation of performing this essential consultative task with reasonable speed and without sacrifice of individual responsibility for describing the situation requiring action.

The intelligence community does not recommend action, of course, but it does describe situations which ought to be meaningful in terms of actions policymaking officials are considering. A good intelligence estimate is not an abstract exercise in cerebration but is a pointed analysis of a situation relating to national security. It ought to be as effectively presented and phrased as a good staff action paper -- perhaps even better, because the subject matter is likely to be more abstract and the nuances and color in the author's choice of words is likely to be vital to a subtle understanding of the situation being described.

By some lower-level-of-consciousness reasoning, coordination in the intelligence business has in practice come to mean word-by-word concurrence of all the intelligence agencies.

This practice has not only slowed down the production of intelligence estimates at the national security level but also has insured that when fully coordinated estimates do emerge into the daylight they usually reflect the carefully considered, carefully phrased views of nobody in particular. They are the drab and soulless products of a bureaucratic system which seems to have a life and a limping gait of its own.

These harsh remarks are not intended to suggest that our national intelligence estimating machinery is of no value. To the contrary, I would like to make clear at the outset that I think the initial organization of this machinery in 1951 -- with which I am very proud to have helped -- is one of the major advances in the history of the US intelligence business. It is obviously desirable for the government officials making national security decisions to have available in written form the best composite judgments of the interagency intelligence community on the main strategic situations affecting US security.

Even with the deficiencies I have suggested, the coordinated national estimates provide a sort of floor of common knowledge and common agreement

- 96 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

under the policymaking process. At a minimum they serve the purpose of preventing wild ideas from carrying the day in the absence of effective confrontation with the agreed general view. In the old days it was perfectly possible for one agency to produce a little thinkpiece setting forth some preposterous theory about Soviet intentions and, through the agency staff channels, present it on the highest policy level without it occurring to anyone to question whether or not this represented the best intelligence views of equally well informed people in the intelligence community. I trust this does not happen now, or at least that there are a great many people who would stand up at some point during the policy consideration to say that such a proposal should be checked out against the national intelligence estimates. This is clearly a net gain of enormous worth.

What I am suggesting, however, is that we have won that net gain at the price of making our estimates much less timely, interesting, and useful than they could be. If we had not allowed ourselves to become so devoted to the concept of coordination of the written word at all costs and at all lengths, I feel we could do a better job of presenting the best views available in the intelligence community rather than the lowest common denominator of agreed doctrine.

The first great defect of our coordination technique is merely the staleness that passage of time brings to a long-disputed thesis. In principle, of course, the national intelligence machinery can bring out an estimate in short order. I believe that there are in history the recorded cases of estimates written and agreed in two or three days. These were very short estimates produced under circumstances of extraordinary urgency. It is enough to say that what is usually called a "crash" estimate is usually produced in about two weeks' time. A good solid national intelligence estimate runs anywhere from six weeks to six months. Perhaps we can afford the luxury of writing estimates at this pace, but I very much doubt that the estimates so produced are as useful as they could be if they were produced much more rapidly. In the present system, unhappily, the estimates are bound to contain very few surprises and very little of immediate interest to our policymakers.

Much worse than this out-of-date quality, however, is the second great defect of the coordinated estimate -- the flatness of ideas agreed by four or five contributing draftees. It is simply not true that the more people and the more views represented in the drafting of a paper, the better the paper is. Sometimes a brilliant paper slips relatively unmarred through drafting sessions in which a large number of people are involved. But too often papers which, although imperfectly phrased and controversially put, make a contribution to knowledge at the beginning of the coordination process emerge either so long afterward that all of the sparkle of the basic idea is lost or so much watered-down and flattened-out as to be virtually meaningless.

The reason for the delay, the watering-down, and the flattening-out is not hard to find. Any group of working-level government officers brought together to "coordinate" a paper are under an enormous obligation to their bureaucratic superiors to emasculate any sentence which suggests, or might suggest, the contrary of a view held in their particular part of the bureaucratic forest. This caution tends to bring on a process of horse-trading in which every interested party secures his privilege of excluding an objectionable phrase in return for permitting the exclusion of some sentence which is anathema to another representative, although it may not be at all objectionable to the rest of the group. Add up four or five or six of these representatives as parties to the proceedings -- and crank in the normal personal vagaries in reacting to someone else's prose -- and you speedily reduce a paper to its lowest common denominator of meaningfulness.

After all, we are all familiar with the phenomenon whereby most people feel that it is possible to express their own ideas only in their own words. This factor alone poses an almost impossible situation for anyone trying to draft a simple, cleancut view of a complex intelligence problem.

I, too, happen to like my own prose better than the words used so clumsily by other people. Unfortunately, I have discovered that my colleagues also seem to prefer their own, even over mine. My way of solving this problem, and the problem of many drafters representing multiple interests, is to determine, on the basis of subject matter, whether a paper is mainly my paper or my colleague's paper. If it is my paper I strongly believe that the best way to get the main ideas across is for me to draft it in my own words, presenting it in the way that seems to me to be most effective.

At that point in drafting I like to consult all of my colleagues, whoever they may be and whatever agency they may work for, who know something about the subject. Inevitably I get a considerable amount of comment, both on the main ideas and on the words in which they are expressed. This I think is healthy, and in many cases I am persuaded either that I am wrong in what I was trying to say -- in which case I want to change it by all means -- or that I have not presented it very effectively -- in which case I am anxious to rephrase it in the light of my failure to put it across. It may be that I think my colleagues are simply dense, but nevertheless I ought to adjust my verbal presentation of the problem to carry them along with me in understanding the subject and my view. All this consultation with the best minds of the community is desirable even essential. It is what I consider to be coordination properly understood.

In other words, coordination is ideally a process of consultation with knowledgeable and interested members of the intelligence community for

the purpose of getting new information, taking account of differing views, and insuring the most effective presentation of an intelligence analysis. I think it is true to say that in many cases a person drafting a paper on a broad and complex subject is obligated to accept the information supplied him and, in general, to adopt the interpretive views held by the most expert and responsible people, wherever they work. This sharing of knowledge is the whole reason for working as an intelligence community.

On the other hand, if there is any function for a central and coordinating group in the intelligence community, it is precisely in the sphere of subjecting to careful inquiry the views of all members in the community on situations cutting across specialized departmental interests, making a valid synthesis, and presenting the general truth of the matter in an effective manner, even though it may not fully please any single member of the group. If, when this purpose has been accomplished, a responsible member of the community still feels that the paper makes a major substantive error, as distinct from being badly expressed, then I think it would be most proper for the dissenting person to express himself as effectively as he can in language of his own choosing setting forth where he feels the basic paper has erred.

This last point -- the right of major dissent -- is an important one. I know from experience that in many complex intelligence problems the most effective way to discover the essential outlines of a tricky situation is to have an analyst present his case and then to listen to the views of any dissenting analyst. I submit that the net result of a strong view of this sort with a substantive dissent is much more helpful and meaningful to the person who actually needs to know something about the situation than is a compromise set of general cliches which do not indicate the difficulty and conflict of view inherent in the situation as seen through the evidence the intelligence community possesses.

The sum and substance of what I have been saying is that the US national security system would be better served if the intelligence community took a less vigorous view of the meaning of coordination and substituted more informal techniques of consultation. In this way the intelligence community could share knowledge and wisdom without delaying or weakening the product.

Such an arrangement would work like a consulting group of physicians, one a general practitioner and the others specialists. If the disease is complex and cuts across specialists' lines, the general practitioner (CIA in intelligence) should take responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment, consulting and using the skills of the specialists (State, Army, Navy, Air, et al.). In no case should the doctors confuse the diagnosis to disguise the fact that they could not agree among themselves nor, of course, should they let the patient die while they argue.

- 99 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY *

R. J. Smith **

In discussing the coordination of national intelligence it seems to me essential to recognize at the outset that coordination is certainly here to stay and probably will continue to be conducted pretty much along present lines. No amount of talk will either make it go away or alter its basic nature. This is so not because those people presently responsible for coordinating national intelligence are insensitive to visions of an ideal world where gentleman scholars would discuss world problems broadly and then retire to write individual appreciations. It is so primarily because national intelligence has become an integral part of the complex machinery for planning and policymaking of the US Government and has thereby acquired responsibilities not previously held by intelligence.

In the earlier and possibly more light-hearted years of CIA it was always a matter of some speculation as to who the users of national intelligence really were. We had a distribution list with names on it, but we had little evidence as to what happened once the estimates were delivered. We were in the position of shooting arrows into the air -- some of them elegantly shaped and still bearing the tool marks of individual craftsmen -- and having them land we knew not where. There was some fretting over this uncertainty, but it was balanced to a degree by an accompanying freedom in how we directed our effort. Coordination in those days varied in its difficulty and its intensiveness almost with the moods and states of health of the participants. On one occasion, a coordination meeting would become almost a pro forma operation. On another, it might be the scene of sharply personal bickering and bad feeling, illuminated with sparks of verbal wit and showered with forensic displays.

Over the past five years this has changed. The broadening development of the centralized planning and policymaking mechanism has brought sharp changes in all governmental activities involved with problems of national

* Studies in Intelligence, Vol 1, No. 4, Fall, 1957, pp. 19-26.

** Mr. Smith is Deputy Director for Intelligence.

security. National intelligence has been affected along with the rest. At the same time, national intelligence has gained strikingly in prestige and authority, partly as a consequence of its new responsibilities in policy and planning but also as a result of growing maturity and technical improvement throughout the entire intelligence community.

We no longer are in any doubt as to what use is made of national estimates. In a majority of cases, the customer (the National Security Council, one of its major members such as the White House, or one of its subordinate components such as the Planning Board) has given us specifications for the task and has set a date for its completion. If our customer discovers new specifications to be included, alterations are made before the estimate is completed; if he discovers his need has greater or less urgency than originally thought, the timing is adjusted. In all those cases where the policy and planning mechanism has originated the request, we know from the outset that the finished estimate will become the basis for a review of US policy toward the area or problem under consideration. We know this will be true also of a substantial number of other estimates which have been initiated through other auspices, including our own.

It is not new for intelligence to serve as a basis for policy. To greater or less degree, this has always been so and has provided intelligence with its reason for being. What is new is that this relationship has been formalized and institutionalized in such fashion as to make the connection far more direct and effective than ever before. Recognition throughout the intelligence community of the immediacy of this connection has profoundly affected both the estimates themselves and their coordination.

The present day national estimate bears only an indistinct resemblance to one of its remote ancestors, the literary or scholarly essay. In the days of our youth the resemblance was more apparent than it is today.

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vides before beginning work.) It is inevitable and proper that some readers, bringing to bear primarily the standards for literary or scholarly essays, should criticize the national estimates for general lack of reader appeal. It is perhaps also inevitable but considerably less proper that they should simultaneously place the blame for this condition entirely on the process of coordination.

National estimates are not scholarly essays. They are primarily work papers for planners and policymakers. This does not mean that these papers need be unreadable, or that they cannot be more readable than

- 101 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

they sometimes are, but it does mean that they must be the embodiment of precise writing. Anyone who has ever tried to write really precisely -- so precisely that several different groups of planners can get exactly the same content from a statement of fact or a judgment -- knows that in order to reach such precision one must boil off nearly all the esters of personal flavor and strive for a flat objectivity. Also, in this connection, one must bear in mind that the planners and policymakers in question are high level and have neither the time nor the necessity to master enormous quantities of detail. They need only that amount of detail necessary to support the handful of key estimative judgments to be made about the situation before them.

Having said this much, let us look more narrowly at the impact of coordination upon these national estimates. First of all, let there be no mistake about the necessity for coordination. Many criticisms of the present coordinated estimates represent an attempt, in one guise or another, to squirm away from this necessity. It may be true that one individual, or a small group of talented individuals, could on many occasions, write estimates with sharper edges than coordinated estimates, but the difficulty is that such estimates would not meet the need of the White House and the National Security Council. What the highest levels of the national government most emphatically do not need is a batch of estimates on the same subject by separate intelligence organizations, each paper out of key with the other in exposition, emphasis, and conclusion. This situation would merely pass responsibility for the ultimate intelligence judgment on to the policymakers. What they require instead is a single document which contains the collective judgment of the intelligence community, an estimate which delineates the areas of general intelligence agreement and identifies where necessary the points of major substantive dissent, an estimate to which all the chief intelligence officers of the national government will concur. Looked at from this perspective, the coordination process becomes the heart of the matter, not an unnecessary evil. Its characteristic defects and its burdens become problems to be worked with and to be eased, not avoided. In fact, looked at from this angle, one can even recognize that the coordination process has benefits and merits in its own right.

Knowing as they do that the finished national estimate will become the basis for a policy which will vitally affect the mission and responsibilities of their department, the representatives of the various intelligence agencies take the coordinating sessions seriously. As their departments' spokesmen, they have a deep and responsible interest in seeing that the final estimate does not ignore information available to their department or does not arrive at judgments contrary to the views of their departmental intelligence specialists and chiefs. At the same time, they must avoid damaging the prestige and integrity of their department by pushing departmental views in defiance of contrary evidence or by failing to inform their department of the extent to which its view stands in isolation from the rest of the community.

- 102 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

The CIA responsibility in this process is different in kind but equally great. In the first place, the draft discussed by the coordination meeting is a CIA draft based on written contributions from the several departmental agencies. These contributions, frequently longer individually than the finished estimate, are rich in detail and analysis and provide a broad base for the estimate. The CIA drafters synthesize these departmental papers into a single estimate, making such augmentations or changes in analysis or emphasis as they think the objective situation requires. When this draft, well-tested within CIA, is placed before the coordination meeting, it has its own inner cohesion and strength. Like all well-constructed and ramified pieces of writing, its built-in inertia makes it hard to move very far. It responds gently to nudges but resists hard shoves. Moreover, it has the support and protection of the CIA representatives, including the chairman, who, though ready to accept suggested improvements and useful additions or corrections, are quick to challenge estimative changes unsupported by sound evidence or objective reasoning. The national estimate which emerges from this intensive coordination has been thoroughly stretched and tested but most times has not been altered fundamentally. On those occasions when deep-reaching changes have been made, the CIA representatives have become convinced that these changes would produce stronger, sounder estimates.

A common complaint about coordinated intelligence -- or coordinated anything for that matter -- is that it merely represents the lowest common denominator of opinion. In the light of the discussion above, the only accurate rebuttal to this charge as it applies to national estimates is that it is not true. It is true that some degree of compromise is nearly always involved in the effort to reach full agreement. Short of going to war, no method other than compromise would appear to be available for reaching written agreement on really complicated matters. This is all the more true in the realms of judgment and future projection where national estimates must necessarily operate. Intelligent and responsible compromise is an essential tool in the coordination process, but, by definition, intelligence compromise does not include adding buckets of water to sound judgments merely to obtain agreed positions. The avenue which enables us to avoid this undesirable result is the dissent.

Keeping in mind that the primary mission of national intelligence is to provide the White House and the NSC with agreed estimates, it ought to be apparent that a national estimate laden with dissents would not fit the requirement. By the same token, however, an estimate which glossed over, or compromised out of existence, legitimate and fundamental divergencies would not meet the requirement. One does not want to confront the President or the Secretary of Defense at every turn with unresolved differences which force him to make his own choice. At the same time, one does not want to paper over substantial divergences and let him believe no differences of view exist.

- 103 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

One must realize, however, that dissents are not easily contrived. First, the actual substantive difference must be isolated and the dissenter convinced that his is the dissenting and not the majority view. Then he must accustom himself to the notion of standing naked and alone in a footnote with his peers arrayed against him in the main text. Each of these stages is invariably accompanied by surges of new conviction on the part of the dissenter that his position is the right one, after all, and that one more try will convert the rest of the group. In short, the trickiest and most vexing problems in coordination revolve around the point at which the quest for agreement should be abandoned and a clearly defined dissent should be prepared. But to say it is hard is not to say it cannot be done. To prevent enforced coordination, statements of dissent are employed now as often as the skill of the CIA coordinators can bring them about. Growing maturity among the intelligence community will probably make this an easier result to obtain as time goes on.

Another common complaint about coordination is that it takes so much time the estimates are no longer fresh when they are produced. In actual fact, this criticism has less validity than almost any other. No one involved in producing national estimates would deny it takes time. Papers involving special research problems or new techniques have taken as long as ten months. Routine estimates commonly take six to eight weeks. On the other hand, the IAC machinery has produced a coordinated national estimate in five hours and has on several occasions produced them in 36, 48, or 72 hours. At first glance, in a world where the daily newspaper is regularly scooped by television, six to eight weeks, let alone ten months, seems an unconscionable amount of time. Even five or forty-eight hours seems long. Viewed from the perspective of operational or current intelligence, it probably is a long time. Viewed from the perspective of planning national strategy, it is not. A number of our estimates project forward five years because it is necessary for some kinds of policy planning to look five years ahead. Nearly all the estimates project at least a year ahead. Against this time span, the time taken to produce them does not seem long. To put it another way, an estimate which could not withstand the passing of a mere eight weeks could scarcely serve as the basis for planning a year or five years ahead.

But whatever view one has about the right length of time to spend producing a coordinated national estimate, the remarkable fact is that the coordination itself -- the time spent in meetings resolving differences in views and obtaining an agreed text -- takes only a small fraction of the total time spent. A study of twenty-four planned and routine national estimates, the longest taking 285 days to produce and the shortest 62 days, disclosed that the average time actually required for coordination meetings was under ten percent. The remainder was spent in the preparation of terms of reference, research, and preparation of agency contributions, and the writing and reviewing of the draft within CIA. Even this low percentage figure does not tell the full story because it includes estimates on such matters as Soviet gross capabilities, where weeks of meetings were held to work

- 104 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

over the complicated evidence underlying detailed strength figures and capabilities estimates. A more representative figure for coordination meetings would be between one and three days, most commonly two.

Is one led inevitably by this discussion to the conclusion that the necessary art of coordinating national estimates is in a perfect state? The answer is certainly no. As in all good-sized meetings, both within government and without, progress in coordination sessions is frequently slow and uncertain. Too frequently, those who know the least talk the most. Even worse, on some occasions one of the participants may be virtually devoid of substantive grasp. Sometimes, persons with a fair understanding of the substance under discussion come so rigidly instructed regarding a certain point that discussion of it is futile. Almost always, there is a tendency among the participants to commit that fundamental but all-too-human semantic error, that of identifying the word inexorably with the thought: Thought A can only be expressed by Word A.

What is the remedy for this state of affairs? What can be done, particularly when much of the difficulty is inherent in the method? Can we overcome the fundamental inefficiency of the committee meeting, that peculiarly American contribution to the arts of governing? Well, certainly not, but we can exploit fully our growing technique in running meetings, extracting from them their maximum value as the creators of new perspectives and holding to a minimum their nonproductive aspects. Can we elevate semantic understanding and sophistication to such a level as to remove this most frequent barrier to agreement? Again, no, at least not all at once, but we can recognize this shortcoming in ourselves and thus contribute to greater flexibility in achieving a solution.

In short, the path to improvement of the coordination process lies not through the imposition of ideal solutions but through gradual, slow advance by small adjustments here and there. We can obtain better quality of representation at the coordination meetings. There is, in fact, perceptible progress in this respect over the past several years. The advantages of sending representatives with substantive understanding and empowering them with a fair degree of latitude in negotiation are already apparent to most of the IAC agencies. We can achieve a higher degree of group responsibility and freedom from partisan attitudes as maturity increases. Moreover, we can adopt various innovations in procedure as they seem desirable. We could, just for example, ask the IAC agencies to send representatives to participate with us in the drafting sessions on certain occasions in order to speed the process and facilitate agreement. But whatever we do, we cannot -- as I hope I have made clear -- do away with the coordination process. It is the heart of national intelligence. To make it tick strongly and surely is our problem.

- 105 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

D. ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

A CRUCIAL ESTIMATE RELIVED *

Sherman Kent **

Special National Intelligence Estimate 85-3-62, entitled "The Military Buildup in Cuba," became the official pronouncement of the United States Intelligence Board on 19 September 1962. This estimate was undertaken when reporting from Cuba began to indicate a steep acceleration in Soviet deliveries of military supplies to Cuba. The tempo of its production was more rapid than "routine," but far less rapid than "crash." At the time it was completed, those of us engaged in it felt that its conclusions A and B represented a basic analysis of the situation. Here they are:

A. We believe that the USSR values its position in Cuba primarily for the political advantages to be derived from it, and consequently that the main purpose of the present military buildup in Cuba is to strengthen the Communist regime there against what the Cubans and the Soviets conceive to be a danger that the US may attempt by one means or another to overthrow it. The Soviets evidently hope to deter any such attempt by enhancing Castro's defensive capabilities and by threatening Soviet military retaliation. At the same time, they evidently recognize that the development of an offensive military base in Cuba might provoke US military intervention and thus defeat their present purpose.

B. In terms of military significance, the current Soviet deliveries are substantially improving air defense and coastal defense capabilities in Cuba. Their political significance is that, in conjunction with the Soviet statement of 11 September, they are likely to be regarded as ensuring the continuation of the Castro regime in power, with consequent discouragement to the opposition at home and in exile. The threat inherent in these developments is that, to the extent that the Castro regime

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thereby gains a sense of security at home, it will be emboldened to become more aggressive in fomenting revolutionary activity in Latin America.

And conclusions C and D were an attempt to predict what further developments might occur. They read:

C. As the buildup continues, the USSR may be tempted to establish in Cuba other weapons represented to be defensive in purpose, but of a more "offensive" character: e.g., light bombers, submarines, and additional types of short-range surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). A decision to provide such weapons will continue to depend heavily on the Soviet estimate as to whether they could be introduced without provoking a US military reaction.

D. The USSR could derive considerable military advantage from the establishment of Soviet medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba, or from the establishment of a Soviet submarine base there. As between these two, the establishment of a submarine base would be the more likely. Either development, however, would be incompatible with Soviet practice to date and with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it. It would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in US-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far, and consequently would have important policy implications with respect to other areas and other problems in East-West relations.

As is quite apparent, the thrust of these paragraphs was that the Soviets would be unlikely to introduce strategic offensive weapons into Cuba. There is no blinking the fact that we came down on the wrong side. When the photographic evidence of 14 October was in, there was the proof.

Soon after the consequent crisis had subsided, a number of investigations were set in train aiming to understand why the estimate came out as it did. What follows are my own thoughts on the subject and some philosophical generalizations about the business of intelligence estimating. My central thought is that no intelligence mechanism imaginable can be anything like one hundred percent sure of predicting correctly the actions of a foreign government in a situation such as this one was. If similar situations develop in the future and if their course must be estimated from the same sort of evidentiary base, these situations too are bound to be susceptible to the same sort of misjudgment.

- 107 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

The Estimating Machine

Although many of our readers are aware of the process by which National Intelligence Estimates are produced, it is perhaps desirable to set forth again the general ground-rules.

When time allows (and it did in the case of the Cuba estimate) the process is fairly complicated; it involves a lot of thought and planning at the outset, a lot of research and writing in the intelligence research organizations of the military and the State Department, a drafting by the ablest staff in the business, and a painstaking series of interagency meetings devoted to review and coordination. Before it gets the final USIB imprimatur a full-dress NIE goes down an assembly line of eight or more stations. At each it is supposed to receive (and almost always does) the attention of a highly knowledgeable group. The Cuba estimate passed through all these stations.

The laborious procedure has seemed to me worth while if for no other reason than that it is aimed at achieving three important goals: the production of a paper tailored exactly to the requirements of the policy consumer; the full deployment of every relevant intelligence resource (documents and knowledgeable people) within the community; and the attainment of a best agreed judgment about imponderables, or lacking unanimity the isolation and identification of dissenting opinion.

In any of the major estimates it would not be difficult to demonstrate that a thousand, perhaps thousands of, people in intelligence work scattered all over the world had made their modest witting or unwitting contribution to the finished job. Foreign service officers, attachés, clandestine operators and their operatives, eavesdroppers, document procurers, interrogators observers, "photographers" and the photo interpreters, reporters, researchers, sorters, indexers, reference and technical specialists, and so on have been gathering, forwarding, arranging, and sifting the factual stuff upon which the estimate rests. Final responsibility for the form and substance of the ultimate blue book rests with far fewer, but a good number just the same. These are the estimators throughout the community, including the staff of the Office of National Estimates, the DCI's Board of National Estimates, and the USIB principals themselves.

So much for what might be called the physique of the process: it has also its purely intellectual aspects. Like any solid conceptual construction, the National Intelligence Estimate is prepared in rough accordance with the procedures of the scientific method.

In very general and, I fear, over-simplified terms, the process goes like this. After a confrontation of the problem and some decisions as to how it should be handled, there is a ransacking of files and minds for all information relating to the problem; and an evaluation, analysis, and digestion of this information. There are emergent hypotheses as to the

- 108 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

possible aggregate meaning of the information; some emerged before, some after its absorption. No one can say whence come these essential yeasts of fruitful thought. Surely they grow best in a medium of knowledge, experience, and intuitive understanding. When they unfold, they are checked back against the facts, weighed in the light of the specific circumstances and the analysts' general knowledge and understanding of the world scene. Those that cannot stand up fall; those that do stand up are ordered in varying degrees of likelihood.

The Search into Uncertainty

As an NIE begins to take form it carries three kinds of statements. The first is easily disposed of; it is the statement of indisputable fact ("The Soviets have a long-range heavy jet bomber, the Bison"). The second and third kinds do not carry any such certainty; each rests upon a varying degree of uncertainty. They relate respectively (a) to things which are knowable but happen to be unknown to us, and (b) to things which are not known to anyone at all.

As an example of the former, we have seen the Bison up close and from afar, photographed it in the air and on the ground.

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its performance characteristics are accordingly a matter of calculation or estimate. Likewise, although some Soviet official knows with perfect assurance how many Bisons there are, we do not. Our calculation of Bison order of battle is an estimate, an approximation.

Over the years our estimates of these knowable but unknown things have probably come closer and closer to the objective fact, but it is sobering to realize that there is still a notable discrepancy between the CIA and Air Force estimates of operational Bisons, and that only last year our seemingly solid estimate of Bear order of battle had to be revised upwards some fifteen percent.

It is worth noting here that matters far less esoteric than Bear order of battle can and often do present literally unsolvable problems. An innocent might think that such knowable things as the population of Yemen, the boundaries of Communist China, the geodetic locus of Russian cities, and thousands of other obvious matters of fact could be had for the asking. Not only can they not be had for the asking, they cannot be had at all. The reason is, of course, either that no one has ever tried to find them out, or that those who have tried have approached the problem from different angles with different methodologies and gotten different answers, of which no single one can be cited as the objective fact.

The third kind of statement, in (b) above, represents an educated guess at something literally unknowable by any man alive. Characteristically

it often deals in futures and with matters well beyond human control: Will Nkrumah be with us for the next two years? five years? Or it deals with matters under human control but upon which no human decision has been taken: How many Blinders will the Soviets have five years hence? What kind of antimissile capability? What will be their stance in Cuba next year? It may be that the Soviet leaders have temporized with these issues, agreed to go planless for another six or eighteen months. Or it may be that they have decided, but at this time next year will drastically alter this year's decision. Ask almost anyone what he plans to do with his 1965 holiday and see what you get. If you do get anything, write it down and ask him the same question a year from now.

If NIEs could be confined to statements of indisputable fact the task would be safe and easy. Of course the result could not then be called an estimate. By definition, estimating is an excursion out beyond established fact into the unknown -- a venture in which the estimator gets such aid and comfort as he can from analogy, extrapolation, logic, and judgment. In the nature of things he will upon occasion end up with a conclusion which time will prove to be wrong. To recognize this as inevitable does not mean that we estimators are reconciled to our inadequacy; it only means we fully realize that we are engaged in a hazardous occupation.

It has been murmured that a misjudgment such as occurred in the Cuba SNIE warrants a complete overhaul of our method of producing estimates. In one sense of the word "method," this cannot be done. As indicated earlier, the method in question is the one which students reared in the Western tradition have found to be best adopted to the search for truth. It is the classical method of the natural sciences, retooled to serve the far less exact disciplines of the so-called science of human activity -- strategy, politics, economics, sociology, etc. This is our method; we are stuck with it, unless we choose to forsake it for the "programmer" and his computer or go back to the medicine man and his mystical communion with the All-Wise.

What can be done is to take a hard look at those stages of the method where it is most vulnerable and where a relaxation of vigilance or an undue inflexibility may lead to error in judgment. First consider the so-called evaluation of the "facts."

The Matter of Mental Set

In our business we are as likely to be faced by the problem of a plethora of raw intelligence as by one of its paucity. In many of our tasks we have so large a volume of data that no single person can read, evaluate, and mentally file it all. It gets used in a finished intelligence study only through being handled along the line by a group of people who divide the labor. Obviously the individuals of this group are not identical in talent or anything else, and each brings to the task his own character,

personality, and outlook on life. There is no way of being sure that as they read and evaluate they all maintain the same standards of criticism or use common criteria of value and relevance.

Merely as an example of what I am saying: it could have been that half a dozen such readers were inclined to believe that the Soviets would put strategic weapons into Cuba and another half-dozen inclined to believe the opposite. In some measure the subsequent use of a given document depends upon who handles it first and gives it an evaluation. It could be that a valuable piece of information falls into disrepute because its early readers did not believe its story. The obverse is also possible -- that an incorrect story should gain great currency because of being wholly believed by wishful critics. It is a melancholy fact of life that neither case is a great rarity, that man will often blind himself to truth by going for the comforting hypothesis, by eschewing the painful.

What is true of the evaluation of raw intelligence at the reporting or desk officer level is generally true all along the line. The main difference between the early evaluation and that at the national estimates level is the quantity evaluated, not necessarily the quality of the evaluation. The relatively few people on the national estimates staff and board cannot, indeed do not try to, read all incoming reports. They read and appraise what survives the first few stages of the winnowing-out process -- still a formidable amount of paper. For the rest they rely upon the word of the specialists who have handled the material in the first instance. The senior estimates people have had more experience than the average and their skills are probably greater, but they are still men with normal human fallibilities.

In last analysis these fallibilities lie in a man's habits of thought. Some minds when challenged respond with a long-harbored prejudice, some with an instantaneous cliché. Some minds are fertile in the generation of new hypotheses and roam freely and widely among them. Other minds not merely are sterile in this respect but actively resist the new idea.

Any reputable and studious man knows the good and evil of the ways of thought. No worthy soul consciously nourishes a prejudice or willfully flashes a cliché; everyone knows the virtues of open-mindedness; no one boasts imperviousness to a new thought. And yet even in the best minds curious derelictions occur.

The Data on Cuba

I do not believe, however, that any such derelictions occurred in the matter of evaluating the evidence on Cuba. What little data we had prior to 19 September I am sure we weighed and measured with open minds.

- 111 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

What was this evidence? To begin with, there was of course no information that the Soviets had decided to deploy strategic missiles to Cuba and indeed no indication suggesting such a decision. Moreover, months after that decision had been reached, and during the period when the estimate was being drafted and discussed, there was still no evidence that the missiles were in fact moving to their emplacement. With the benefit of hindsight one can go back over the thousand and more bits of information collected from human observers in the six months ending 14 October and pick out a few -- a very few -- which indicated the possible presence of strategic missiles. The report of CIA's Inspector General says: "It was not until shortly after mid-September that a few ground observer reports began coming in which were specifically descriptive or suggestive of the introduction into Cuba of Soviet offensive weapons."

The IG goes on to list the "handful" which "can be related" to these weapons. The list comes to eight. Of these I would agree that no more than two or possibly three should have stopped the clock. None of these was available before the crucial estimate was put to bed. Even if they had been here in time and even if we had intuitively felt (and a notable among us did so feel) that such weapons were on the way, these three bits of evidence would probably not, taken in the context of the other thousands, have been seized on as pointing to the truth. In the mass of human observation and reporting there were items to support or destroy almost any hypothesis one could generate.

Nor did the aerial photography of September dissipate the uncertainty. Not only did it fail to spot the ominous indicators of missile emplacement but over and over again it made fools of ground observers by proving their reports inaccurate or wrong. The moment of splendor for the U-2s, cameras, film, and PIs when finally the sites and associated equipment were photographed and identified had not yet arrived with the close of the business day of 19 September.

Thus of the two classical invitations to error in the estimating business, we cannot be said to have fallen for the first: I refer of course to the neglect or wishful misvaluation of evidence because it does not support a preconceived hypothesis.

Though perhaps tempted, we also did not kick the problem under the rug. We did ask ourselves the big question, "Are the Soviets likely to use Cuba as a strategic base?" We asked ourselves the next echelon of questions, "Are they likely to base submarines, light bombers (IL-28s), heavier bombers, and long-range missiles there?" Our answers are cited above.

The Logic of Intent

How could we have misjudged? The short answer is that, lacking the direct evidence, we went to the next best thing, namely information which might indicate the true course of developments. We looked hard at the fact of the Soviet military buildup in Cuba for indications of its probable final scale and nature. We concluded that the military supplies piling into Cuba indicated a Soviet intent to give Castro a formidable defensive capability -- so formidable as to withstand anything but a major effort on the part of an attacker. We felt that the Soviet leaders believed the worldwide political consequences of such an effort would be recognized in the United States and would be the strongest possible deterrent to U.S. military moves to overthrow Castro. Obviously we did not go on to argue that the Soviets might think they could raise the deterrent still higher by supplying the Cubans with long-range missiles, which they would still proclaim to be purely defensive.

As noted, however, we did consider the matter. And in answering the questions that we posed ourselves on the likelihood of the Soviets' building Cuba into what this country would have to regard as a strategic base, we called upon another range of indicators. These were indicators derivable from precedents in Soviet foreign policy.

When we reviewed once again how cautiously the Soviet leadership had threaded its way through other dangerous passages of the Cold War; when we took stock of the sense of outrage and resolve evinced by the American people and government since the establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba; when we estimated that the Soviets must be aware of these American attitudes; and when we then asked ourselves would the Soviets undertake the great risks at the high odds -- and in Cuba of all places -- the indicator, the pattern of Soviet foreign policy, shouted out its negative.

With hindsight one may speculate that during the winter and early spring of 1962, when the Soviets were making their big Cuba decisions, they examined the posture of the United States and thought they perceived a change in it. Is it possible that they viewed our acceptance of setbacks in Cuba (the Bay of Pigs), in Berlin (the wall), and in Laos as evidence of a softening of U.S. resolve? Perhaps they did, and on this basis they estimated the risks of putting missiles into Cuba as acceptably low. Perhaps, when they contemplated the large strategic gains which would accrue if the operation succeeded, their estimate of the U.S. mood was wishfully nudged in this direction. And perhaps again, to close the circuit, they failed to estimate at all the consequences of being themselves faced down in a crisis. If all these speculations are correct -- and there is persuasive argument to sustain them -- even in hindsight it is extremely difficult for many of us to follow their inner logic or to blame ourselves for not having thought in parallel with them.

On 15 October we realized that our estimate of the Soviets' understanding of the mood of the United States and its probable reaction was wrong. On 28 October we realized that the Soviets had realized they had misjudged the United States. In between we verified that our own feeling for the mood of the United States and its probable reaction had been correct. In a way our misestimate of Soviet intentions got an ex post facto validation.

Ways Out We Did Not Take

In brooding over an imponderable -- like the probable intentions of the Soviet Union in the context of Cuba -- there is a strong temptation to make no estimate at all. In the absence of directly guiding evidence, why not say the Soviets might do this, they might do that, or yet again they might do the other -- and leave it at that? Or like the news commentators, lay out the scenario as it has unwound to date and end with a "time alone will tell"? This sort of thing has the attractions of judicious caution and an unexposed neck, but it can scarcely be of use to the policy man and planner who must prepare for future contingencies.

Even more tempting than no estimate is the "worst case" estimate. This consists of racking up all the very worst things the adversary is capable of doing and estimating that he may undertake them all, irrespective of the consequences to his own larger objectives. If one estimates thus and if one is believed by the planner, then it follows that the latter need never be taken by unpleasant surprise.

Engaging in these worst-case exercises may momentarily cheer the estimator. No one can accuse him of nonchalance to potential danger; he has signaled its existence at each of the points of the compass; congressional investigators will have lean pickings with him. But in all likelihood a worse fate awaits. Either his audience will tire of the cry of wolf and pay him no heed when he has really bad news to impart, or it will be frightened into immobility or a drastically wrong policy decision.

It was tempting in the matter of Cuba to go for the worst case: but in the days before 19 September we knew that the evidence would not sustain such an estimate, and our reading of the indicators led us in the opposite direction.

Why No Revision?

If wrong as of 19 September, why did we not put things to rights before the 14 October photographs? Why did we not recall and modify the estimate when the early ground observer reports reached us or when we finally got the photo of the inbound Soviet ship with its deck cargo of crated IL-28s? Could we not have repaired the damage a week or so in advance of 14 October and given the policy-maker the advantage of this precious time?

In the first place, these pre-14 October data almost certainly would not, indeed should not, have caused the kind of shift of language in the key paragraphs that would have sounded the tocsin. Of themselves and in context they should not have overpowered all to the contrary and dictated a one-hundred-eighty-degree change to "The Soviets are almost certainly developing Cuba as a strategic base right now." The most they should have contributed to a new version would have been in the direction of softening the original "highly unlikely" and adding a sentence or two to note the evidence, flag a new uncertainty, and signal the possible emergence of a dangerous threat. If we had recalled the estimate or issued a memo to its holders in early October we would have had a better record on paper, but I very much doubt that whatever in conscience we could have said would have galvanized high echelons of government to crash action.

In the second place, it is not as if these new data had no egress to the world of policy people except through National Intelligence Estimates. The information was current intelligence when it came in and it promptly went out to the key customers as such. This is of course the route that most, if not all, important items of intelligence follow. That constituent part of an NIE that I earlier referred to as the range of knowable things that are known with a high degree of certainty is often very largely made up of yesterday's current intelligence.

In the multi-compartmented intelligence business, two compartments are at issue -- an estimates compartment and one for current intelligence. They are peopled by two quite separate groups and follow quite different lines of work. Nevertheless, there is the closest interrelationship between them. The current intelligence people handle almost minute by minute the enormous volume of incoming stuff, evaluate it, edit it, and disseminate it with great speed. The estimates people work on a longer-range subject matter, hopefully at a more deliberate pace, and make their largest contributions in the area of judicious speculation. NIEs are produced at the rate of 50 to 80 a year; individual current intelligence items at that of some ten thousand a year. The current people look to estimates as the correct medium for pulling together and projecting into the future the materials that continuously flow in. The estimators for their part rely on the current people to keep alert for news that will modify extant estimates.

The estimators do themselves keep the keenest sort of watch for this kind of news. Indeed the estimates board members and staff chiefs start every working day with a consideration of new information that might require revision of a standing NIE. But the board feels that certain criteria should be met before it initiates a new estimate. These are: (1) The subject matter of the estimate must be of considerable current importance. (The situation in Blanka was important at the time of our last estimate on the subject, but it is not very important now; hence today's

- 115 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

news, which may give the lie to major portions of the Blanka estimate, will not occasion its formal revision.) (2) The new evidence must be firm and must indicate a significant departure from what was previously estimated. (We would not normally recall an estimate to raise a key "probably" to an "almost certainly" nor to change an estimated quantity by a few percentage points. Unless we adhere to these criteria and let current intelligence carry its share of the burden, very few NIEs could be definitely buttoned up, and those which had been would have to be re-opened for almost daily revisions. Maybe this is the way we should direct our future effort; some of our critics seem to imply as much. Myself, I think not.)

The Enemy's Viewpoint

Some of our critics have suggested that we would have avoided the error if we had done a better job of putting ourselves in the place of the Soviet leadership -- that if we had only looked out on the world scene with their eyes and thought about it the way they did we would not have misread indicators and all would have been clear. Upon occasion this proposition is made in a way to suggest that its articulator feels that he has given birth to a brand new idea. "Your trouble," he says, "is that you do not seem to realize you are dealing with Russian Communists and a Soviet government policy problem." As such statements are made, I must confess to a quickening of pulse and a rise in temperature. I have wondered if such people appear before pastry cooks to tell them how useful they will find something called "wheat flour" in their trade.

If there is a first rule in estimating the probable behavior of the other man, it is the rule to try to cast yourself in his image and see the world through his eyes. It is in pursuit of this goal that intelligence services put the highest premium on country-by-country expertise, that they seek out and hire men who have deeply studied and experienced a given nation's ways of life, that they procure for these men daily installments of information on the latest developments in the area of their specialty. To the extent that objectivity of judgment about the other man's probable behavior is the crux of the intelligence business, to that extent is the importance of living the other man's life recognized and revered.

Since at least World War I intelligence services have from time to time set a group of individuals apart and instructed them to think of themselves as the enemy's general staff. Their task as a red team is to ponder and act out the way the enemy will respond to situations as they develop. The idea seems to be that by the creation of an artificial frame -- sometimes going to the lengths of letting the personnel in question wear the enemy's uniform and speak his sort of broken English-- you will get a more realistic appreciation of the enemy's probable behavior than without the frills. It does not necessarily follow.

Consider the case of one intelligence service that created such a unit to simulate a Kremlin staff. It not only assigned some of its own officers but also employed the talents of some real one-time Communists. This latter move was regarded as the new "something" to cap all similar previous games. In a short time all members of the group became spirited dialecticians and as such were able to give Soviet problems impeccable Marxist solutions -- to which, however, a Stalin, a Malenkov, or a Khrushchev would not have given the time of day. This particular exercise always seemed to me to have reached a new high in human fatuity. Five James Burnhams may afford insights into the working of Communist minds, but by no means necessarily into those of particular minds that are in charge of Soviet policy.

Of course we did not go in for this sort of thing. We relied as usual on our own Soviet experts. As normally, they did try to observe and reason like the Soviet leadership. What they could not do was to work out the propositions of an aberrant faction of the leadership to the point of foreseeing that this faction's view would have its temporary victory and subsequent defeat.

The Determinants of Action

Within certain limits there is nothing very difficult or esoteric about estimating how the other man will probably behave in a given situation. In hundreds of cases formal estimates (NIEs, for example) have quite correctly -- and many times boldly and almost unequivocally -- called the turn. Behind such judgments a large number of subjudgments are implicit. The other man will act as diagnosed because (1) he is in his right mind or at least he is not demonstrably unhinged; (2) he cannot capriciously make the decision by himself -- at a minimum it will have to be discussed with advisers, and in nondictatorial governments it will have to stand the test of governmental and popular scrutiny; (3) he is aware of the power of traditional forces in his country, the generally accepted notions of its broad national interests and objectives, and the broad lines of policy which are calculated to protect the one and forward the other; (4) he is well informed.

To the extent that the "other man's" diplomatic missions and intelligence service can observe and report the things he must know prior to his decision, they have done so. He has read and pondered. These and other phenomena very considerably narrow the area of a foreign statesman's choice, and once thus narrowed it is susceptible to fairly sure-footed analysis by studious intelligence types. As long as all the discernible constants in the equation are operative the estimator can be fairly confident of making a sound judgment.

It is when these constants do not rule that the real trouble begins. It is when the other man zigs violently out of the track of "normal" behavior

that you are likely to lose him. If you lack hard evidence of the prospective erratic tack and the zig is so far out of line as to seem to you to be suicidal, you will probably misestimate him every time. No estimating process can be expected to divine exactly when the enemy is about to make a dramatically wrong decision. We were not brought up to underestimate our enemies.

We missed the Soviet decision to put the missiles into Cuba because we could not believe that Khrushchev could make such a mistake. The fact that he did suggests that he might do so again, and this in turn suggests that perhaps we do not know some things about Soviet foreign policy decision-making that we should. We can be reasonably sure that certain forces which sometimes mislead Western foreign offices are seldom effective in the Soviet government. It is hard to believe, for example, that a Soviet minister has to pay much heed to an unreasonable press, or to domestic pressure groups, or, in the clutch, to the tender feelings of allies and neutrals.

If these well-known phenomena are not operative, what things are pressing a Soviet decision-maker towards a misestimate or an unfortunate policy decision? Obviously there are the fundamental drives inherent in Communism itself, but for these and the many things that go with them we, as diviners of Soviet policy, are braced. Are there perhaps other things of a lesser but nevertheless important nature that we have not fully understood and taken into account? I would like to suggest two that are closely linked: the role and functioning of Soviet embassies; and the role of intelligence and the philosophy of its collection, dissemination, and use. I would like to suggest that if we were to study these more deeply we might discover that many a Soviet misestimate and wrong-headed policy is traceable to the peculiar way in which the Soviets regard the mission of their ambassadors and the role they assign to their intelligence service.

Whence the Decisive Intelligence?

Obviously you cannot divine the functions of Dobrynin in Washington by studying Kohler in Moscow. Obviously a Soviet foreign mission has a quite different aura from other foreign missions we know a good deal about. But just what does a Soviet ambassador's job description look like? What does his government expect him to do beyond the normal diplomatic functions all ambassadors perform? What are his reporting functions, for example, and what kind of reporting staff does he have? What do he and they use as the raw materials for their purely informational dispatches -- if indeed they write any?

Does the embassy staff proper compete with the KGB men in its reporting? We know that the top KGB dog in an embassy has a certain primacy over locally-domiciled Soviet citizens -- including the ambassador. Does this primacy extend to reporting? Does the ambassador check his

reports out with the KGB boss before sending them off? One thing we can be sure of -- the KGB boss does not check his out with the ambassador. If ambassadorial reports are written and sent, who in Moscow reads them? Does Khrushchev? Do the Presidium members? How do the highest echelons of government regard them as against, say, KGB or GRU clandestine reports and pilfered documents?

I find myself wondering a lot about Dobrynin. Suppose he had been informed of Moscow's estimate that the U.S. resolve had softened. Suppose he had agreed with this estimate in general. Is it possible that he would have gone on to agree with Moscow that the risks of sending strategic missiles to Cuba were entirely acceptable? It may be that he was not informed of this second estimate. But if he was so informed, I have great difficulty believing he would have agreed with it. Dobrynin is not a stupid man, and presumably he must have sensed that Castro's Cuba occupied some special place in American foreign policy thinking. Is it possible that, sensing the U.S. mood, he did not report it, and bolster his findings from what he read in the press and Congressional Record, what he heard on the radio and TV? Is it not more likely that he did send back such appraisals and that Moscow gave them little notice because they were not picked up in a fancy clandestine operation? Is it possible that the conspiratorial mind in the Kremlin, when faced with a choice of interpretations, will not lean heavily toward that which comes via the covert apparatus?

We have recently learned quite a lot about this apparatus and the philosophy of its operation and use. We think we have valid testimony from defectors who have come out of the Soviet and Satellite intelligence services that enormous importance is attached to clandestine procurement of documents containing the other man's secrets of state. We know that whatever overt research and analysis work is done in the Soviet government is not associated with the intelligence services. That the findings of this type of effort are denied the cachet of "intelligence" may rob them of standing, perhaps even of credibility.

We know that the Soviet practice of evaluating raw reports prior to dissemination is a pretty rough and ready affair (no alphabetical and numerical scale of estimated reliability, for example) that leaves the customer with a very free choice to believe or disbelieve. There is evidence to indicate that a KGB resident abroad has the right to address a report to a military chief of staff or to the foreign minister or to Khrushchev himself. His boss in Moscow is in the chain of communication and can, of course, stop dissemination to the high-placed addressee. But if the resident in question is known to be a friend of the addressee the boss will think twice before he interferes. We are reasonably certain that there is a hot wire between Semichastny, chief of KGB, and Chairman Khrushchev and that it is used to carry current raw intelligence between the two.

- 119 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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It is tempting to hope that some research and systematic reinterrogation of recent defectors, together with new requirements served on our own intelligence services, might turn up new insights into the Soviet process of decision-making. The odds are pretty strongly against it; and yet the -- to us -- incredible wrongness of the Soviet decision to put the missiles into Cuba all but compels an attempt to find out. Any light that can be thrown on that particular decision might lessen the chances of our misestimating the Soviets in a future case.

- 120 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

THE INTELLIGENCE ARM: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Fred Greene *

CPYRGHT

We are all aware, after two decades of cold war, that foreign policy poses difficult problems for the democratic process of government. Traditional concerns about the need for secrecy, speed of action, special information, and sensitivities of foreign governments place foreign policy in a special category of governmental affairs under any circumstances. These concerns apply with even greater emphasis to intelligence, which has become a special arm within the realm of American foreign policy in recent decades. This development has further magnified the problems of exercising responsible controls over the policy process, and bringing to bear adequate judgments concerning operational effectiveness.

Even the most straightforward categories of military intelligence, those that affect the national security directly and immediately, including estimates of an opponent's preparations for a surprise attack or a dangerous shift in the disposition of his strategic forces, raise issues that are far from simple and clearcut. We can all agree, for example, that information regarding Soviet missile deployments is of the highest importance. But verification usually takes considerable time, especially if previous information had been proven incorrect after painstaking review. Or the political price of collection might be very high, as was the case in the U-2 crisis of 1960. Someone must measure at the outset the relative costs of "not knowing" as against the price of finding out, all before an incident has occurred or a particular fear is confirmed. Similarly, it takes great wisdom to decide what degree of verification, short of certainty, can justify a grave retaliatory or preventive measure.

Still more complex and elusive is the field of political intelligence involving answers to such questions as: What policies and objectives

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CPYRGHT

are other states pursuing? Under given circumstances which of the particular options apparently open to them will they choose? And what would their reactions be to the specific policies or proposals put forward by the United States?

I

The Cuban missile crisis lends itself to detailed study of the complex intelligence craft because the crisis was of limited duration, the major events of the drama were sharply etched in detail, and intelligence played a central role in the formation of policy before and after the discovery of the Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba. From this incident, many general principles of the intelligence function may be derived; from it too we may see how intelligence serves (effectively or otherwise) as an instrument of foreign policy. For this confrontation required of intelligence a general estimate of a basic political situation: that of the Soviet-American power equation and of fundamental Soviet security policy. Intelligence also had to look for specific signals that would indicate important changes in Russian behavior patterns. The policy stakes involved in effective collection and accurate evaluation of evidence were high, but so were later decisions on how to sue and disseminate this hard-won information. Throughout the crisis, intelligence provided the decision makers greater leeway than otherwise would have been the case, in such crucial choices as the timing of their reaction, the diplomatic method and arena of response, and even the substance of the policy adopted.

The political roots of the missile crisis lay in the decision of the Castro government to throw Cuba into a deep socio-economic revolution along what its leaders held to be Marxist lines. This was combined with a diplomatic alignment with the Soviet Union, source of much aid and favorable trade agreements during 1960-61. Among the more important American reactions following the Bay of Pigs incident of April, 1961, was the determination to remove Cuba as a participant in the inter-American system, an effort that bore fruit after considerable debate at Punta del Este in January, 1962. There, by a bare two-thirds majority, the O.A.S. went beyond its 1960 condemnation of Communist intervention in hemispheric affairs to exclude, but not expel, Cuba from its system. During the months that followed, the Cubans apparently sought the protection of a Russian alliance and treaty of guarantee but instead received the Soviet offer to place surface-to-surface missiles (S.S.Ms.) on their soil. A treaty between the two states, announced on September 1, 1962, promised Cuba arms and technicians "to resist the imperialists' threats."

CPYRGHT

American intelligence operations by the beginning of September had already discovered the presence of various defensive dispositions, the most significant of which were anti-aircraft or surface-to-air missiles (S.A.Ms.), and the presence of at least 3,500 Russians in Cuba. During the first half of September, President Kennedy and other high officials reported in detail on defensive weapons entering Cuba, said that no offensive weapons (especially S.S.Ms. and bombers) had arrived, and repeatedly warned Moscow against placing such weapons in Cuba. The Soviet Union stated somewhat ambiguously on September 11 that all dispositions were defensive in purpose, stressing, that is, intent rather than type of weapon. In retrospect, it appears that after the mid-summer decision to place S.S.Ms. in Cuba, the Russians began to ship supportive materials there in early September and the missiles began to arrive in the middle or latter part of that month.

American responses in late September included a congressional authorization on September 24 for the President to call up 150,000 reservists and an effort by the U.S. Air Force to have its Tactical Command combat ready in one month.¹ Air reconnaissance was intensified though bad weather and the elaborate nature of the effort delayed total coverage for a while. However a U-2 flight on October 14 revealed the construction of S.S.M. sites and later photographs enabled intelligence officers to estimate the full scope of the Soviet effort. The week of October 16-22 was devoted to reaching a decision as to the basic American response and the following period, October 22-28, brought on the famous confrontation. The President revealed the crisis in a speech on October 22; the naval quarantine on missile shipments to Cuba took effect on October 24; Mr. Khrushchev's first letter arrived October 26; an American U-2 was destroyed October 27 in the only military engagement of the incident; and the Soviet Union agreed to a withdrawal of its strategic weapons on October 28.

Although a brilliant success in the end, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 also brought in its train many disagreeable surprises. The Russians did manage to ship strategic weapons across the ocean in secrecy. They also apparently operated with unexpected speed and efficiency. Comparisons with Pearl Harbor come to mind immediately: misreading the opponent's intentions, misjudging his technical capacity, not crediting him with sufficient audacity, and analyzing how he would act by imagining how we would act in such a situation. Still we succeeded in 1962 in contrast to the disaster of 1941, and end results still count importantly in evaluating an intelligence effort.

Nonetheless, within the United States, the aftermath brought considerable criticism of the intelligence community. This criticism, which placed

¹Henry M. Pachter, Collision Course (New York, 1963), p. 7.

CPYRGHT

in sharp relief many of the issues and lessons of the crisis, fell into two main categories -- those regarding basic concepts and those dealing with particulars. Among the former or more philosophical issues is the problem of weighing theory and fact as guides to an analytical effort. This involves the eternal need to develop some working hypothesis that enables an analyst to place masses of information in some meaningful pattern; against this is the requirement to guard incessantly against jumping prematurely to conclusions, by letting the facts speak for themselves, at least to a certain extent. A second conceptual issue concerns the intelligence official's approach -- should he emphasize the worst or most dangerous interpretation of the facts or possible evolution of a situation, if only to protect the harassed policy maker from experiencing unpleasant and critical surprises? And what stress should intelligence place upon intentions as against the capabilities of a given antagonist?

The second category of criticism underlines the specific inadequacies of intelligence as a given situation unfolds. This involves an ability to make accurate deductions from known facts -- in this case, for example, whether the presence of air defense missiles signified the presence of other, strategic missiles. In other words, were the analysts too optimistic in their interpretation of the facts on hand? Then there is the matter of timing: did intelligence officers overlook critical evidence regarding the presence of strategic missiles in the crucial twenty-four days between September 21 and October 14, 1962? On a point not squarely within the intelligence framework, can we distinguish between defensive and offensive weapons in this instance; or does the effort to do so mislead an opponent with regard to the nature of America's planned response? How can one estimate whether, and to what degree, an opponent was aware of the depth of America's emotional involvement in the Cuban issue?² In addition to this range of problems, we must also consider the effect of the existing bureaucratic structure upon the ability of the intelligence community to function properly.

II

I believe that our intelligence effort came out well with regard to those issues raised by such critics as Senators Keating and Stennis

² Klaus Knorr places special emphasis on this point in "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," World Politics, XVI (April, 1964), 464-65.

CPYRGHT

(in his Preparedness Subcommittee report) and Mr. Hanson Baldwin. A major point in the entire controversy centers upon the fact that the United States intelligence community, because of its theoretical orientation, was surprised by the Soviet effort to put strategic missiles so far from its homeland. The Stennis Preparedness Subcommittee pointed out that there was a certain philosophical conviction in the intelligence community "that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba."³ This fundamental assumption rested on the belief that the Soviet Union would not risk placing vulnerable and important weapons outside of the area in which it exercised direct physical control. It had never done this before and, save for the error of the Korean War -- a mistake that Khrushchev had acknowledged indirectly many times -- the Soviet Union cautiously refrained from risking a major and direct confrontation with the United States. Building on this analysis, both Mr. Baldwin and the Senate report came to the unwarranted conclusion that the intelligence community tried to make the facts fit its preconceptions and pet theories, and so failed to allow empirical evidence to call the tune.⁴

Actually, as of September, 1962, the intelligence analysis of Soviet behavior patterns rested squarely on the then available facts gathered with painstaking care. To assume a Russian strategic missile effort in Cuba as late as mid-September would have been the theoretical flight of fancy that the critics rightly consider so dangerous. The issue, then, does not center upon a misguided effort to force reality to comply with predetermined views. Rather, it is far more complex and agonizing, especially because the analysts based their reasoning on the solid foundation of prudence and experience. Since we know that nothing continues on the same course forever, the question emerges: when does a situation change and when do all precedents or existing patterns become dangerously out of date? That is, when must an intelligence officer decide that a foe is about to do something rash and novel, something that is quite dangerous, and something for which hard evidence is lacking? This problem more accurately reflects the issues that emerged in 1962 and deserves further consideration and research. Past experiences involving both

³ U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Preparedness Investigation Subcommittee, Investigation of Preparedness Program, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, S.R. 75. See the New York Times, May 10, 1963, for the report's "Summary of Major Findings."

⁴ Hanson Baldwin, "The Growing Risks of Bureaucratic Intelligence," The Reporter, Aug. 15, 1963, pp. 48-52. Mr Baldwin quotes approvingly the Senate report on this and other matters.

CPYRGHT

strategic surprise and anticipations that never became reality (possibly because of preventive measures) require careful investigation. This involves an examination of the estimates made, their degree of accuracy, and the significant patterns, if any, that emerged in those situations marked by drastic and unexpected actions.

A related problem is whether an intelligence officer should emphasize the worst situation that might develop in light of available evidence. The Stennis report holds that "there seems to have been a disinclination on the part of the intelligence community to accept and believe the ominous portent of the information which had been gathered. In addition the intelligence people apparently invariably adopted the most optimistic estimate possible with respect to the information available. This is in sharp contrast to the customary military practice of emphasizing the worst situation which might be established by the accumulation of evidence." As we shall soon note, there was absolutely no hard evidence before September 21, 1962, concerning strategic missiles, so that before that date it would have taken a clairvoyant to "accept and believe" anything of the sort. (One almost gets the impression from studying criticisms that evidence is of a secondary nature, almost a mere verification of overwhelming intuitive knowledge that the missiles were already there.)

When a situation is not clear-cut, and various interpretations are possible, it is indeed the duty and tradition of intelligence to point out the worst possibility. Yet this act does not suffice to guarantee security in a given situation, since officials responsible for actual plans and operations will discount a Cassandra who consistently emphasizes the greatest danger. Their own experience tells them that less dangerous and more likely developments in a spectrum of possibilities frequently come to pass. They will discount new and dire intelligence warnings in ambiguous situations if they have already had their fill of them. There is, at the same time, an opposite danger that those who wish to alter an existing policy radically will seize upon any anticipation of great danger, no matter how carefully qualified in an intelligence analysis, to argue for the adoption of their position as the only escape from impending disaster.

A third conceptual problem, one repeatedly stressed by Mr. Baldwin is that we must go by capabilities rather than by intentions. These words connote a sharp contrast between reliance on the facts (capabilities) as against trying to guess what is in the enemy's mind (intentions). To stress intentions, Mr. Baldwin feels, is to give intelligence control over policy makers, by compelling the latter to follow the single line of action that best reflects the analysis of intentions. This is an unfair criticism, if only because the alleged difference between capabilities (inference: facts) and intentions (inference: guesses) is a myth. Nor do calculations based on intentions necessarily put a nation's security

CPYRGHT

on more dangerous grounds than when we base estimates only on capabilities. For example, we assumed that the Russians had the capability of manufacturing X number of missiles in the late 1950's, based on our knowledge of their physical plant and their technical capacity. Is this a meaningful, hard fact if other information, a point argued vehemently by Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, leads us to conclude that they in-

tend to produce, say only $\frac{X}{Y}$ missiles?⁵ Is one not derelict in his duty to stress only the larger sum if the other figure looks correct? If we always went by capabilities, how would we ever keep our own arms below our own maximum capability?

More fundamentally, evidence of an intention must rest on hard facts to a degree sufficient to make capability -- another set of hard facts -- an unsure basis of analysis. Otherwise the uncertainty would not appear in the first place. In short, we usually have two sets of competing hard facts, making an estimate in either direction somewhat of a guess. Analysts therefore follow the more convincing evidence or the more frequent or meaningful experience. Otherwise, to chain oneself to capabilities -- for example, the Russians can invade Iran or they can overturn the Finnish government -- could lead to a harmful diplomatic and military posture at a given moment, if other evidence regarding intentions indicates that these are unlikely events. Would not an exclusive stress on capability also mean control over policy makers by intelligence? Clearly, the problem of capabilities and intentions is too subtle to resolve simply by identifying either one with "the facts."

III

The intelligence community has also been subjected to the criticism that its thinking was influenced by wishful and optimistic interpretations of the facts, thereby making its evaluations and estimates far too sanguine. Thus, the Preparedness Subcommittee held that the intelligence community was inclined to accept only those things which bolstered an optimistic interpretation. Yet in the late summer of 1962 the intelligence community was considerably disturbed, even though it had patiently screened a tremendous amount of information without finding evidence that

⁵ See for example the Testimony of Secretary Gates in Department of Defense Appropriations for 1961, Part 1, esp. p. 23. Hearings, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 86th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1960.

CPYRGHT

the Soviets had placed strategic missiles on the island.⁶ Because they were worried, intelligence officials increased their efforts to make certain that nothing was amiss. The critics themselves in different contexts, have reported the considerable variety of efforts at intelligence collection undertaken that September. No one held that a strategic missile base on the island lay outside the realm of possibility; indeed, because of the dangers involved, intensive efforts were made, leading to the alert and rapid discovery of the missile emplacements.

Before September 21, as Mr. Baldwin has noted, there was no evidence that the Russians had strategic missiles in Cuba. Yet Mr. John McCone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, felt that the Russians would install missiles of a strategic sort and he proved to be correct. He based his view on a deduction that the emplacements of S.A.Ms. indicated an intent to install S.S.Ms. on the island. Mr. McCone was proven correct in the Cuban case. However, the Russians have put S.A.Ms. in Indonesia; Iraq had them before the 1963 coup; the U.A.R. was reported in the press to have them in 1964; and India has been promised a sizable number of S.A.Ms. It is quite possible that the Soviet Union will give or promise surface to air missiles to other states since they bring large political dividends at little economic cost. Some states will reject these weapons as unnecessary or too expensive to maintain; others might find the offer attractive, for prestige and security reasons.

This is not to say that the establishment of S.A.M. sites in Cuba in mid-1962 was not of itself a politically and militarily serious development. But though significant, this did not allow a firm conclusion that S.S.Ms. were also present, without substantiating evidence. The existence of S.A.Ms. did arouse suspicions, thereby adding to the intelligence community's determination to intensify its surveillance. To go beyond such prudent responses and to argue that the presence of S.A.Ms. equals the presence of S.S.Ms. does not afford a reliable basis for analyzing the significance of S.A.M. emplacements in other parts of the world.

IV

There is also the question of timing. When was the evidence physically there? When did we learn about it? When did we actually believe it?

⁶ See the letter by Congressman Samuel Stratton in The Reporter, Oct. 10, 1963, defending the intelligence officials, and the editor's response, quoting the Senate report, supporting the criticism made in the report and by Mr. Baldwin, pp. 8, 10.

CPYRGHT

Here we are dealing with what ultimately proved to be America's greatest triumph. Mr. Baldwin has noted that "irrefutable evidence becomes available, commencing about September 21."⁷ This statement contains an inference, albeit vague, that there was some degree of certainty in the evidence during the twenty-four days between September 21 and October 14. Senator Keating has stated that he was told early in October of evidence from sources other than aerial reconnaissance; the latter, he observed, did not "fully record the presence of strategic missile sites until October 14."⁸

Was irrefutable evidence obtained -- and overlooked -- in those twenty-four days? Was it new and strikingly different from the vast number of false alarms, such as those reported in the press, of the previous two years? Or are we again dealing with the clarity of 20-20 hindsight, which made the evidence both irrefutable and clearcut after the aircraft had done their job? Senator Keating himself has noted that via aviation we received "fully recorded" evidence on October 14. That date was about the earliest on which evidence of actual construction could have been perceived through this medium. This remarkable achievement does not mean that other evidence was not required or sought. But it does indicate that we learned through air photography what the Russians were doing just as they mounted a significant effort to build their missile delivery structure in Cuba.

Was the evidence that came in earlier through different sources sufficient to make a convincing case within the United States? Would it have enabled the government to take the diplomatic and strategic offensive? And how pressed were we for time? To take the last question first, we should note that even after October 14, the President wanted eight more days in which to prepare his program and his arguments, and then it took five additional days to settle the issue. Hence we still had time -- almost two weeks -- after the Russian missile construction effort reached a sufficiently advanced state on October 14 to be photographed.

Even more important was the relationship between the type of evidence and the diplomatic strategy that the President selected. Having decided on open diplomacy and a direct confrontation rather than a covert effort to force the Russians out, conclusive evidence presentable in an open forum became pivotal to his endeavor. With this as national policy, decided upon by the responsible officials (in accordance with the requirement that intelligence should not control or direct policy), it seems only

⁷ Baldwin, "The Growing Risks of Bureaucratic Intelligence."

⁸ Letter by Senator Kenneth Keating in The Reporter, Sept. 12, 1963, p. 6.

CPYRGHT

reasonable to conclude that the evidence gathered by aerial reconnaissance was both essential and timely. It admirably suited the President's basic objective of getting the missiles out of Cuba.

To be valuable, intelligence cannot operate in a vacuum; rather it must help broaden the choices available to the prudent leader and make these options more meaningful. It is of greatest service when it enhances national policy in the diplomatic context within which it is employed. In the effort to convince the diplomatic and public opinion of the world, any evidence accumulated by the United States government by means other than aerial photography during the last week in September and the first two weeks in October, however important, would not have done this job. Nor, as we have seen, did the time span in this situation have a significant negative effect on our ability to respond. What does emerge is that other types of firm information are difficult to acquire, take time to verify, require the most careful evaluation, and present formidable problems as instruments of diplomacy. These handicaps will continue to beset intelligence as an arm of foreign policy in the foreseeable future.

V

There remains the issue of whether a distinction can be made between offensive and defensive weapons. The administration carefully distinguished between them in September, stressing that only the former were unacceptable. But did the administration's attitude, in accepting one type of missile, lead the Soviet Union to feel that the United States would take a less determined stand against the presence of strategic missiles? Mr. Baldwin avers that the distinction is impossible because defensive weapons (for example, S.A.Ms.) can protect offensive ones, thus making the context of employment rather than physical properties the key factors. Yet the administration did not appear confused on this score in 1962; nor did it believe as Senator Keating argues, that it had blurred the issue by drawing such a distinction. It was in fact issuing a last warning to the Russians against going beyond their significant defensive build-up in Cuba. During the first half of September, the President in his press conference on September 13 and Under Secretary Ball in his testimony before the Congress on October 3 both stressed the difference between offensive and defensive weapons in this vein.⁹ Mr. Ball's testimony, detailing the presence of defensive weapons, was published in full. Mr. Walter Lippmann in a long follow-up analysis carefully went over this presentation, pointing out the distinctions between defensive and offensive weapons and warning about the consequences of

⁹ The Washington Post and Times-Herald, Sept. 5 and 14, 1962.

CPYRGHT

the latter.¹⁰ The effect of these public statements and writings was to clarify the differences between the two types of weapons and to underline the danger that would follow if the Russians placed strategic missiles or bombers in Cuba. It is difficult to see how any of this could have left the Russians confused, because, unlike other situations in the past, these signals from Washington came through quite distinctly.

The evidence thus reveals a fairly clear picture. The Russians simply chose to disbelieve what was said, or concluded that Washington did not mean what it said. Perhaps they felt that the United States would not act before the missiles were in position and then would be afraid to act, so that it did not matter what statements were made in September. Since their calculations were made long before September, it seems only fair to conclude that the Russians in their gamble were insensitive to all American statements, rather than encouraged or confused by them. If such is the case, then we should properly concentrate on how such a dangerous condition came to pass.¹¹ On the other hand, the Russians may well have acted rationally in recognizing the large risk involved but felt that it was worth taking because of the great benefits that success would bring. Once launched on this course, they may have convinced themselves that the risks were not so high, and so disregarded American warnings.

In the end, it was Russian thinking and analysis that was seriously mistaken and the Soviet Union had to pay a very high price as a consequence. We should recall that American intelligence credited Moscow with a desire, based on the record of the past, to operate in a prudent, non-provocative way. The intelligence community considered actions in violation of such precepts to be out of character and foolish, and in the end it was proven correct. Perhaps the critics who overlook this fail to recognize that many actions on the part of foreign governments are beyond our capacity to influence. Is this another variation of the "illusion of American omnipotence"?

Each side apparently made the mistake of identifying its opponent's mode of calculation with its own. Thus Russian estimates of American

¹⁰ Ibid., Oct 9, 1962.

¹¹ Knorr, in "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates," argues that the Soviet leaders failed to grasp the depth of American feeling against Cuba and so under-estimated the risks their action incurred. However, in light of the audacity of the move, it is difficult to assume that the Russians did not realize that this was a most risky enterprise. Moreover, it was not emotionalism over Cuba but concentration on the danger posed by Soviet power that sparked the American reaction, which emphasized the bipolar nature of the confrontation.

CPYRGHT

reactions to Russian initiatives were quite possibly colored by Moscow's knowledge of how it itself would react. After all, the Kremlin stood by while the United States ringed it with air and missile bases during the 1950's. Thus each side "plays all the roles" -- but calculates the other's initiatives or responses from its own perspective. Overcoming this inclination is a formidable task -- worthy of the most patient effort. Certainly, at the time, the argument that our acceptance of defensive weapons and our warnings against offensive ones blurred the issue would not have been credible. We need only remember the shocked response of the American public when the President spoke on October 22 in order to realize how sharply the country distinguished between the two.

VI

In addition to considering philosophic precepts, the question of timing and type of intelligence, and the nature of the weapons involved, we must also examine some comments made about the organizational setting of the intelligence operation in Washington. Mr. Baldwin has noted that it suffers from excessive bureaucratic centralization and from a predisposition to follow administration policy objectives in a way that prejudices its interpretation of data. Actually the component agencies that comprise the intelligence community are independent and autonomous bodies, somewhat removed from the policy effort. They come to their own conclusions based on their own efforts. The rise of the Defense Intelligence Agency (D.I.A.) as a centralizing body within the Defense Department may reduce the voices of the three services, but it is also possible that the Department of Defense will speak with four independent voices rather than three as in the past. Not only do the existence of D.I.A. and C.I.A. as potential rivals make it clear that we are a long way from centralized, monolithic control, but the other intelligence groups in Washington retain their independence because they are component parts of still other branches of the government involved in national security matters.

These different bodies have their own sources of intelligence and their own requirements, and each stresses differing aspects of this broad field. This means that richness of sources is not necessarily mere duplication, for different requirements elicit significantly different kinds of information. One great marginal advantage is the wide scope this allows for cross-checking. In any event, we must overcome the notion that duplication in government is the same "bad thing" as duplication in business. The question of profit-through-efficiency and singleness-of-effort are not necessarily the criteria by which one can judge success in an enterprise so dangerous and tricky as national security. We find considerable autonomy even within the defense establishment and C.I.A., let alone in the relations between these two components or between one of them and

CPYRGHT

other intelligence bodies. As in other forms of political and social organization, there are recurrent conflicts of view within an agency, and serious disagreements often produce alignments that cut across formal bureaucratic lines. All too often a finished product will suffer from compromises among the interested parties, who water down its content excessively. This is a far cry from the imposition of a single viewpoint from a higher political or administrative authority.

This raises the question of how to balance vigorous autonomous efforts in the research and evaluation field with a substantial final version that gains community-wide acceptance. All one can arrange institutionally is a framework that allows for diversity and some method of objective appraisal and judgment. Even so, those in opposition to an adopted position have every right and duty to take exception and they are quite willing to do so when issues of national security are involved. Thus intelligence is not made to fit a finished product or to coincide with presidential viewpoints or statements. To argue that intelligence officials dare not disagree once the President says there is a certain number of troops in Cuba is to ignore the fact that the statement is based on the findings of the intelligence community. If a minority of the intelligence officials holds a different view on this or any other point, what is the President to do? Is he simply to base his statement on the minority position, because it is more ominous or more reassuring? All this should not inhibit those in the minority from adhering to their position or trying to prove themselves correct.

Finally the power of outside forces to investigate and police the intelligence community is highly underrated. The Congress has great powers in this field and if it does not exercise them, it is not because the machinery of government prevents it from doing so. It may reflect an unwillingness to bear the burden of dealing with vast amounts of sensitive information. Yet when one looks at the performance of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, involving the most serious and horrendous matters, as concerns both security sensitivity and destructive capacity, it seems that the Congress could logically play as effective and constructive a role in the intelligence field as well. A joint committee on intelligence would doubtless have a salutary effect in both policy and administrative matters.

VII

In conclusion, the Cuban missile crisis indicates that, though the intelligence community was surprised at the start, it handled the situation fairly well. The careful nature of its effort in late summer and early fall, and the manner and speed with which it uncovered evidence

CPYRGHT

indicate that it was not entirely napping. At the same time, the critics, by raising issues in public perform a valuable service in requiring officials to re-examine and re-study their activities and calculations during a crisis. Much has been done to clarify the facts and illuminate problems in the public realm. All this is to the good. In the course of this intellectual encounter we have seen how certain basic principles of intelligence affect the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. We have also seen how an elemental objective of intelligence, to provide for a nation's strategic security, encounters numerous and unexpected difficulties. Research into earlier crises, evaluation of the impact of intelligence upon events for good and for bad, and explanations of unanticipated developments -- all admittedly with the aid of hindsight -- are essential for a broader understanding of the achievements and limitations of intelligence as an instrument of foreign policy.

CUBA AND PEARL HARBOR: HINDSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

Roberta Wohlstetter *

To recall the atmosphere of September and October 1962 now seems almost as difficult as to recreate the weeks, more than two decades earlier, before the attack on Pearl Harbor. But if we are to understand the onset of the Cuban missile crisis, it is worth the effort. Indeed we may learn something about the problems of foreseeing and forestalling or, at any rate, diminishing the severity of such crises by examining side by side the preludes to both these major turning points in American history. In juxtaposing these temporally separate events, our interest is in understanding rather than in drama. We would like to know not only how we felt, but what we did and what we might have done, and in particular what we knew or what we could have known before each crisis.

Afterthoughts come naturally following the first wave of relief and jubilation at having weathered the missile crisis and forced the withdrawal of the missiles. But it is good to keep in mind the obvious contrast with Pearl Harbor. At the least, Pearl Harbor was a catastrophe, a great failure of warning and decision. At the very worst, the missile crisis was a narrow escape. Taken as a whole, however, its outcome must be counted as a success both for the intelligence community and the decision-makers. But a comparison of the failure at Pearl Harbor and the Cuban success reveals a good deal about the basic uncertainties affecting the success and failure of intelligence.

It is true for both Pearl Harbor and Cuba that we had lots of information about the approaching crisis. In discussing this information it will perhaps be useful to distinguish again between signals and noise. By the "signal" of an action is meant a sign, a clue, a piece of evidence that points to the action or to an adversary's intention to undertake it, and by "noise" is meant the background of irrelevant or inconsistent signals, signs pointing in the wrong directions, that tend always to obscure the signs pointing the right way. Pearl Harbor,

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looked at closely and objectively, shows how hard it is to hear a signal against the prevailing noise, in particular when you are listening for the wrong signal, and even when you have a wealth of information. (Or perhaps especially then. There are clearly cases when riches can be embarrassing.)

After the event, of course, we know: like the detective-story reader who turns to the last page first, we find it easy to pick out the clues. And a close look at the historiography of Pearl Harbor suggests that in most accounts, memories of the noise and background confusion have faded quickly, leaving the actual signals of the crisis standing out in bold relief, stark and preternaturally clear.

After the crisis, memories fade and recriminations take their place. For a time the Cuban missile crisis figured as an outstanding triumph for the United States -- in the swift discovery of "hard evidence," in the retention of American initiative, in the strict security maintained and in the taut control of power by the Executive Committee. Today, some of these aspects of the Cuban crisis have been thrown into doubt, and in particular, critics talk of a significant intelligence failure in anticipating the crisis. In both Pearl Harbor and Cuba the notion of a conspiracy of silence has been raised, the suggestion that we knew all along and failed to act, that Kennedy, like Roosevelt, had some special information which he withheld, or that information was so obvious that even a layman could have interpreted it correctly.

New York's Senator Keating, for example, was explicit and articulate in insisting that he believed long-range or medium-range missiles and Soviet combat troops were in Cuba as early as August. On August 31 he said in the Senate that he had reliable information on landings between August 3 and August 15 at the Cuban port of Mariel of 1200 troops wearing Soviet fatigue uniforms. He also reported that "other observers" had noted "Soviet motor convoys moving on Cuban roads in military formation," the presence of landing craft, and of suspicious cylindrical objects that had to be transported on two flatcars, and so on. He claimed that his statements had been verified by official sources within the U.S. Government. Between August 31 and October 12 he made ten Senate speeches warning of the Soviet military build-up.

After the crisis, Congressmen naturally wondered why we had not listened to Senator Keating, why it was possible to have had these warnings and many others and still be surprised on October 15. But failures to foresee and to forestall catastrophes are by no means abnormal. Military men and statesmen have no monopoly on being taken by surprise. The example of the Dallas police department springs to mind, and the murder of Oswald which gave rise, like Pearl Harbor, to rumors of conspiracy in high places and in local governments. Nor are American businessmen and financiers immune. Witness the \$150 million DeAngelis vegetable-oil scandal, where

normally cautious bankers suddenly found they were holding empty storage tanks as security for their loans.

Conspiracy with the culprit, however, is hardly a universal line of explanation, as is suggested by a recent natural catastrophe -- the earthquake in and near Alaska that sent a tidal wave to shatter the northern shore of California and caught some towns unprepared in spite of timely warnings. For the warnings sounded just like many others in the past that had not been followed by tidal waves. These are all American examples, but Singapore, "Barbarossa" (the German attack on Russia) and many others suggest that we are not dealing with a purely national susceptibility to surprise.

II

Defense departments and intelligence agencies, of course, continually estimate what an opponent can do, may do, intends to do. They try to gauge the technical limits within which he is operating, to determine his usual ways of behavior, under what conditions he will probe, push or withdraw. They try to measure what risks he will take, and how he might estimate the risks to us of countering him. Much of this work by American analysts is sound, thorough, intelligent, frequently ingenious and sometimes brilliant -- but not infallible. Unhappily, any of these estimates may be partly, but critically, wrong. A wealth of information is never enough.

To get a rapid idea of the mass of data available for predicting the Cuban crisis and the Pearl Harbor attack, let us run through the main intelligence sources. In the case of Cuba, there was first of all magnificent photographic coverage as well as visual reconnaissance. The Navy ran air reconnaissance of all ships going in and out of Cuba, especially ships originating in Soviet or satellite ports during the summer of 1962, and intensified this sort of coverage during September. High-level photographic reconnaissance by U-2s over the island of Cuba was taking place at the rate of one flight every two weeks until the month of September, when it increased to once a week.¹ Low-level photographic reconnaissance began only after the President's speech of October 22-- the first being on October 23. In addition to photography, we had continuous accounts from Cuban refugees who were leaving the island in

¹ Flights over the island took place on September 5, 17, 26, 29, October 5, 7 and 14. The irregularity is attributed to bad weather.

CPYRGHT

a steady stream. We had agents stationed on the island who were reporting, and we were listening to radio broadcasts from Cuba. The Cuban press, while carefully controlled, was making some announcements which are interesting in retrospect. A number of European correspondents stationed on the island were reporting to their newspapers, though the American press was not welcome.

Finally, but by no means least, we had Castro's pronouncements. His casual interviews with reporters, debates with students, interrogations of prisoners, and nearly interminable television speeches offer a rich fount of information. If you wait long enough, it seems, Castro will tell you everything. The only problem in a crisis is that you may not be able to wait that long. Castro is noted for his slyness, and he is perhaps better able than most Cubans to keep a secret. But sometimes he cannot resist hints that may reveal a trap before his victim falls into it. And often in real rather than calculated anger he will show his hand.

For predicting the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States Government had an equally impressive array of intelligence sources. Though aerial surveillance of the Japanese fleet was limited, the Navy had developed a system of pinpointing the location of ships and deducing their types by radio-traffic analysis. This was accomplished by analyzing the call signs of various ships, even though we could not read the content of the messages. Any change in call signs was in itself a cause for alarm, and it took usually several weeks of close listening to an enormous amount of traffic to re-identify the call signs. Call signs were changed on November 1, 1941, and again on December 1. We had not identified the new ones by December 7.

While we had not broken any military codes, we did have one superlative source that is perhaps comparable to the evidence provided by U-2 photography. That was the breaking of the top-priority Japanese diplomatic code, known as MAGIC, as well as some less complicated codes used by Japanese consular observers. We were listening in on diplomatic messages on all the major Tokyo circuits -- to Rome, Berlin, London, Washington and so on. Colonel Friedman, an Army cryptographer, had devised a machine for rapidly decoding these messages, so that, in general, we knew what a message said before its intended Japanese recipients. Our ground observers, stationed in key ports along the coast of China and Southeast Asia, were reporting in by radio.

Ambassador Grew and his Embassy staff in Tokyo were experienced observers of local economic and political activities. Grew himself had a very sound estimate of Japanese character and diplomacy, but as Japanese censorship closed in during the last few weeks before the attack, Grew had to warn Washington that he was unable to report accurately on any military preparations then under way. American newspaper correspondents in Japan were also quite well informed and shrewd in their reporting. In addition to our own sources, we exchanged

information with British intelligence. At that date, our own intelligence officers did not trust British intelligence fully. They expressed a certain amount of unease over British methods of picking up information, which they regarded as sophisticated but underhanded. As General Sherman Miles put it, U.S. intelligence preferred to be "above board." However, the British provided us with some good leads and lots of corroborative information. And there was, of course, the Japanese press, which proclaimed Japan's undying hostility to the American presence in Asia, and announced with increasing violence the Japanese intention to expand to the south.

In sum, for each of the two crises there was plenty of information suggesting its advent. Even though Cuba is a closed society, and even though Japan, in the last weeks, was under heavy censorship and tight security, the data provided by U.S. intelligence agencies were excellent. Once more, then, we come to the question, what went wrong? With all these data, why didn't we know that Japan would attack Pearl Harbor on December 7? Why, when it seems so clear in retrospect, didn't we anticipate that Khrushchev might put medium-range missiles into Cuba? Why didn't we seize the first indications that such installations were on the way? Weren't these early signs clear enough?

Unfortunately, they were not, and almost never are. Even with hindsight, we are not able to reconstruct the exact sequence of events that led to the Cuban missile crisis. Most of our sources are alive, and some of them are talking. But what can we say with certainty about Cuban and Soviet motives? Castro, for example, has spoken on many occasions about why missiles were put into Cuba. But he swings between the view that he requested them and the view that Khrushchev suggested the idea and that he, Castro, felt so indebted economically he had to accept. He has mentioned two motives -- one, defense against an American invasion that he believed was imminent, and the other, the need to advance the international cause of socialism, which implied that the missiles were for offense as well as defense. Khrushchev's story is more consistent, but also more "official": he cites only the need to help Cuba prepare against an American invasion. But of course for active Cuban defense, long-range missiles are not necessary. Speculation on Soviet and Cuban motives still continues.

With hindsight, we can look back now and see that during the crisis there were naturally many confusions embedded in the mass of intelligence reports. A report of a "missile" might refer to a surface-to-air missile which is approximately 30 feet long, to the nose cone of a surface-to-surface missile which is about 14 feet long, to its body which is almost 60 feet long, or to a fuel storage tank. Or perhaps it might just represent the imagination of an excited Cuban refugee. Most of these objects were seen at night through closed shutters and in motion. Visual observation, except by a highly trained observer, was not likely to be accurate even as to the length of the object. And Senator Keating did not act altogether responsibly in perpetuating this confusion centering around the word "missile."

CPYRGHT

He was right when he described the total build-up as alarming, but he was proceeding beyond the evidence in suggesting, as he did, that he had positive proof of the presence of medium-range missiles,² and of the capability for rapid transformation of surface-to-air missiles into medium-range surface-to-surface missiles.

Or take the presence of Soviet combat troops. President Kennedy's critics noted after the crisis that in his October 22 speech he made no mention of combat troops in Cuba, although the American public was later informed of their presence. Actually, Soviet troops, organized into four regimental units, totaled approximately 5,000 men. They were located at four different spots, two near Havana, one in Central Cuba and one in Eastern Cuba. They were equipped with modern Soviet ground-force fighting equipment, including battlefield rocket launchers similar to the American "Honest John." This equipment, along with the accompanying barracks and tent installations, was not identifiable, or at least was not identified, until we started photographing at low level. For this reason, President Kennedy made no demand about removal of troops on October 22, but kept to the colorless term, "Soviet technicians." While U-2 photography is almost as magical as the MAGIC code at the time of Pearl Harbor, like the code, it is limited; it cannot reveal all.

III

For the layman, the feeling persists that there must be some marvelous source that will provide a single signal, a clear tip-off that will alert the American forces and tell them exactly what to do. Unfortunately, there is no instance where such a tip-off arrived in time, except perhaps in the Philippines in 1941, when General MacArthur had a minimum of nine hours' warning between his knowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack and the initial Japanese assault on his own forces. The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor clearly did not tell him what alert posture to take, since his planes were found by the Japanese attackers in formation, wing-tip to wing-tip on their bases.

Instead we must wait for a number of signals to converge in the formation of a single hypothesis about the intentions and actions of an opponent.

² See testimony, September 17, 1962: United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations and Committee on Armed Services, Situation in Cuba, 87th Cong., 2d Sess., 1962, p. 7, 12; U.S. News and World Report, November 19, 1962 (distributed week of November 12), p. 87; and speech to the Senate, October 12, 1962.

This is a necessary but slow process. In 1962, for example, General Carroll, head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, became suspicious of Soviet activities on the basis of several pieces of data from different sources. According to Secretary McNamara's testimony,

. . . [Carroll] had had thousands of reports like this. What gradually formed in his mind was a hypothesis based on the integration of three or four pieces of evidence, one of which was not a report at all, one of which was a recognition through photographic analysis that a SAM (surface-to-air missile) site appeared to be in a rather unusual place. . . . Gradually over a period of time -- I do not know over what period of time -- but sometime between the 18th of September and the 14th of October, there was formulated in his mind a hypothesis specifically that there was the possibility of a Soviet ballistic missile installation in a particular area, a hypothesis that had been formulated previously and had been tested previously and found to be in error with respect to other locations.

His only action here -- I think quite properly his only action here -- was to test that hypothesis, to submit it to the targeting group that targets the reconnaissance missions, and place that target on the track for the next reconnaissance mission, which was the October 14 mission.³

This period of time from September 18 to October 14 is not long for the crystallization of a hypothesis.⁴ It is long only in relation to the speed of the missile installation. This sort of time difference is a perpetually agonizing aspect of intelligence interpretation. Collection, checking of sources and interpreting all take time. There is always delay between the intelligence source and the evaluation center, and between the center and the final report to the decision-maker. Even then, the decision-maker may merely request more information before taking action. In the meantime, the opponent moves forward.

³ U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, p. 45-46. These hearings contain most of the intelligence data cited in this article.

⁴ According to Roger Hilsman, the request for a U-2 flight covering the western end of the island was made on October 4 -- ten days before the flight was actually made. "The Cuban Crisis: How Close We Were to War," Look, August 25, 1964, p. 18.

In the Cuban missile crisis, for example, there were delays in the identification of surface-to-air missiles. From July 29 to August 5, Cuban refugees reported that "an unusual number of ships" unloaded cargo and passengers at the ports of Havana and Mariel. All Cubans were excluded from the dock. By August 14 these reports reached U.S. intelligence agencies, which the next day requested U-2 photo coverage of the suspect areas. On August 29 the flight was made. From the first visual observation on July 29 to the over-flight on August 29 a full month passed.

This August 29 flight turned up the first hard evidence of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba. During September, surveillance flights seem to have been stepped up: the U-2 flew on September 5, 17, 26, 29, and on October 5, 7 and 14. On the September 5 flight, which took in the San Cristobal area a hundred miles east of Havana, the photographs showed no evidence of medium-range missiles. A flight scheduled for September 10 was canceled, perhaps because a U-2 had been shot down over Red China the previous day. According to the American press, all U-2 flights stopped while the United States waited for the world reaction.

Secretary McNamara testified that available evidence indicated the first landing of mobile M.R.B.M.s occurred on September 8, and that construction of the sites did not begin before September 15 to 20. It is possible that September 10 photography might have shown some activity at the San Cristobal site. The September 17 flight was of little use because cloud cover obscured the areas photographed. However, between September 18 and 21 further Cuban reports came to U.S. intelligence, and these were evaluated on September 27. They eventually led to the flight on October 14, again over San Cristobal. This flight produced the first reliable evidence of medium-range missiles on the island.

In spite of the frequency of the U-2 flights, there is a lag of 33 days from the first visual observation made by a Cuban exile on September 8, and reported on September 9, to October 14, the day that hard evidence was obtained. There is a lag of 39 days between September 5 and October 14, during which no flights covered the San Cristobal area. This gap in coverage was not apparent until some inquiring Congressmen pressed their cross-examination. When William Minshall of Ohio asserted that the U-2 flights had been covering the wrong end of the island, General Carroll pointed out that it was necessary to cover the eastern and central portions also. Secretary McNamara supported him by pointing out that the September 5 flight over San Cristobal "showed absolutely no activity whatsoever." He also recalled that this was the hurricane season, "and the weather in that part of the Caribbean is very bad. We had a number of flights canceled during that period." Mr. Minshall then produced the official weather report showing clear days in the vicinity of Havana, and said

CPYRGHT

that "the weather from September 25 to October 2, at least at 7:00 in the morning, was generally clear." No one pointed out at that time that weather forecasts, not actual weather, determined the schedule of U-2 flights.

Photographic coverage, then, was apparently being scheduled on the assumption that any Soviet construction would proceed at a pace which might be considered rapid according to our own experience in installing similar equipment. Secretary McNamara repeated several times that there was no missile construction activity in the Havana area on September 5, as if this, coupled with the pressing need to get clear pictures of other parts of the island, were sufficient reason for not covering the area again until October 14. This judgment, with hindsight, may have been correct, but in the absence of the full intelligence picture the layman can only wonder why it was not possible to cover more than one section of the island on a single U-2 sortie, or why it was not possible to make several simultaneous sorties when good weather prevailed. Perhaps Secretary McNamara's statement, made under pressure of Mr. Minshall's criticism, to the effect that "we were facing surface-to-air missile systems that might be coming into operation," indicates that the flight schedule was sensitive to the political atmosphere. The fact is that there were increasing dangers to our pilots as the SAM sites became operational. With the Republicans now in opposition, it was easy for some of them to forget the extreme embarrassment of the Eisenhower regime at the shooting down of the U-2 over the Soviet Union in 1960 and the collapse of the Paris summit that followed. Certainly after the publicity given to the U-2 shot down over Red China on September 9, the United States would not want to lose such a plane over Cuba. U-2 planes are never armed; and the August 29 flight had showed surface-to-air missile installations in western Cuba.

Naval photography shows a somewhat similar gap. Photographs of the crates containing IL-28 bombers were taken on September 28 but not evaluated until October 9, and not disseminated until October 10. This identification of bombers capable of carrying a nuclear or non-nuclear payload of 6,000 pounds and with a combat radius of about 700 nautical miles⁵ came together with a report of October 15 evaluating the U-2 photographs of M.R.B.M.s.

⁵ According to U.U. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 270. According to John Hughes, Special Assistant to General Carroll, "about 600 nautical miles," Hearings, p. 15.

This sort of delay can easily be paralleled in the Pearl Harbor intelligence picture. In the handling of the coded messages, there was inevitably a delay -- from interception of the message at the intercept station through transmission to the decoding center in Washington, determination of priority in handling, assignment for full decoding, assignment for translation and the actual translation, to final delivery to the approved list of recipients. The longest delay recorded in the Congressional hearings is 54 days between interception and translation. Part of the delay is a function of the time necessary for transmission. Part of the delay comes from checking the accuracy of the reports, which is necessary for responsible decision. But these delays in response must all be seen against the forward march of events.

In Cuba, the rapidity of the Russians' installation was in effect a logistical surprise comparable to the technological surprise at the time of Pearl Harbor. Before September 1962 we were scheduling U-2 flights approximately two weeks apart, because we couldn't believe that capabilities could change significantly within a shorter period. But Secretary McNamara testified in his first background briefing (October 22) that the medium-range mobile missiles were planned to have a capability to be de-activated, moved, reactivated on a new site and ready for operation within a period of about six days. The Stennis Report, which reviewed the entire intelligence operation, refers to "a matter of hours."⁶ In one instance, between two sets of photographs separated by less than 24 hours, there was an increase of 50 percent in the amount of equipment visible. On the date of withdrawal, October 28, the medium-range missiles were fully operational. Intelligence estimates set December 15 as the outside date for the non-mobile I.R.B.M.s to be operational.

This kind of technological or logistical surprise may be either a secret so carefully guarded that it doesn't reach our intelligence agencies until after the event; or it may happen too swiftly, too near the outbreak of the crisis, to be transmitted and evaluated in time. In the case of Pearl Harbor, there were two technological changes that failed to reach either the intelligence agencies or the commanding officers who needed the information: (1) that the Japanese had fitted fins to their torpedoes which would permit bombing in the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor; and (2) that the combat radius of the Zero fighter plane had been stretched to 500 statute miles, making possible aerial attack on the Philippines from Formosa. Both of these developments came to fruition only a few weeks before Pearl Harbor.

⁶ U.S., Congress, Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, Investigations of the Preparedness Program, Interim Report on Cuban Military Build-Up, 88th Cong., 1st Sess., 1963, p. 3.

CPYRGHT

IV

Besides technological surprise and the inevitable physical delays involved in transmission and checking, there are more subtle obstacles to accurate perception of signals. First, there is the "cry-wolf" phenomenon. Admiral Stark actually used this phrase in deciding not to send Admiral Kimmel any further warnings about the Japanese. An excess of warnings which turn out to be false alarms always induces a kind of fatigue, a lessening of sensitivity. Admiral Kimmel and his staff were tired of checking out Japanese submarine reports in the vicinity of Pearl Harbor. In the week preceding the attack they had checked out seven, all of which were false.

General Carroll had the same problem with missiles in Cuba. Refugee reports of missiles had been coming in for a year and a half and the first San Cristobal report of September 9 describing that suspect area, later confirmed as harboring medium-range missiles, was "comparable to many other reports ... similarly recieved and checked out," and found to reveal not surface-to-surface missiles, but surface-to-air or nothing at all. This history of mistaken observations by the refugees tended to reinforce the feelings of fatigue and disbelief. There was also a justifiable reaction to the fact that refugee exaggerations of anti-Castro ferment in Cuba had not been properly discounted at the time of the Bay of Pigs, and that their self-interest in wanting to return to Cuba had not been properly weighed. This background increased the reluctance of the intelligence agencies to credit their reports without careful verification. Besides the refugees, members of the Congressional opposition were also using exaggeration and pressure, because they had an interest in overstating provocation in order to indicate laxness on the Administration's part. Senator Keating claimed to have hard evidence at a time when it seems, such evidence did not exist. Opposition pressure tended to evoke a natural counter-pressure from the Administration, which responded by charging irresponsibility in its critics, and which insisted on caution and the necessity for special evidence before entering on such serious action. In this way the opposition served in some respects as rein rather than simply as spur.

Another obstacle to objective evaluation is the human tendency to see what we want to see or expect to see. The Administration did not want open conflict with the Soviet Union. It was working on a program of trying to relax tensions, of which a test-ban agreement was one important though distant goal. It most definitely did not want an offensive Soviet base in Cuba, in the same way that Zermatt, the famous Swiss ski resort, did not want typhoid fever and refused to acknowledge its existence until epidemic proportions had been reached. Just as President Roosevelt wanted no war in the Far East -- no war on two fronts -- and didn't want to believe that it could happen, so we didn't want to believe that the Soviets were doing what they were doing.

When this is the background of expectation, it is only natural to ignore small clues that might, in a review of the whole or on a simple count, add up to something significant. For example, the large ships that turned out to be the villains in the Cuban case had especially large covered hatches. They were unloaded at night by Soviet personnel, and all Cubans were excluded from docks. The contents, whatever they were, were moved at night. The decks were loaded with 2½- and 5-ton trucks and cars. But these ships, in transit, had been noted to be riding high in the water. If intelligence analysts in the American community had been more ready to suspect the introduction of strategic missiles, would this information have led them to surmise, before as well as after October 14, that these ships carried "space-consuming (i.e. large volume, low density) cargo such as an M.R.B.M." ⁷ rather than a bulk cargo? Roger Hilsman points out that these vessels had been specially designed for carrying lumber, and "our shipping intelligence experts presumably deduced that lumbering ships could be more easily spared than others." "We knew," Hilsman writes, "that the Soviets had had some trouble finding the ships they needed to send their aid to Cuba." ⁸ This is a good illustration of the way we can adjust (without doing violence to the facts) a disturbing or unusual observation to "save" a theory -- in this case that the Soviets would not send strategic missiles to Cuba.

Our estimate of Soviet behavior included, of course, some expectation of how the Russians would react to what we were telling them, to our warnings in words and acts. However, we overestimated the clarity of our signals. General Maxwell Taylor had visited Florida bases on August 25 with a great deal of publicity. Naval reconnaissance of ships approaching Cuba had been stepped up to the point where U.S. planes were shot at by nervous Cubans on September 2. Castro reacted with great restraint in commenting on this incident -- a fact which might in itself have been thought suspicious. But above all, on September 4, President Kennedy announced the installation of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba which had been confirmed by the photographs of August 29. He said with the greatest care that we would not tolerate an offensive base or the installation of missiles capable of reaching U.S. territory. He made the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, and he did this publicly in a way that put him on the spot. To anyone familiar with the workings of the American political system, this should have indicated that we were "contracting - in." The President was deliberately engaging his own prestige

⁷ "Department of Defense, Special Cuba Briefing by the Honorable Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, State Department Auditorium, 5:00 p.m., February 6, 1963." A verbatim transcript of a presentation actually made by General Carroll's assistant, John Hughes.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 18.

and that of the country. He was reacting to the Republicans as well as to Castro. He was justifying not acting up to a certain point, but making it more likely that he would act beyond that point. In other words, he was drawing a line, and he was making it extremely unlikely that we would back down if that line were crossed. Again on September 13, the President called attention to the firmness of his commitment.

To the official Administration statements, we must add the formal announcements by the opposition party. Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois and Charles Halleck of Indiana, the Republican Congressional leaders, both issued statements on Cuba on September 7. Halleck warned that the increases in armaments and numbers of military technicians supplied by the Soviet Union to Cuba made the situation there "worse from the point of view of our own vital interests and the security of this country." Senator Dirksen invoked the Monroe Doctrine and defined current Soviet military aid to Cuba as a violation of that doctrine. He pointed out that, in view of our treaty commitments, either the Organization of American States should immediately agree on a course of action or, quoting President Kennedy's speech of April 20, 1961, the United States should act on its own, "if the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration."

American elections and their accompanying distractions have been the subject of world-wide speculation and concern. Yet they are not always easy for an outsider to understand. These protests from the opposition were taking place in a setting of pre-election debate, and Khrushchev may have hoped to exploit that fact. He may not have been aware that the alarm expressed by the Republicans was something President Kennedy could not ignore. In addition to explicit proposals and resolutions about the Monroe Doctrine, there was the President's request for Congressional authorization to call up 150,000 reserves. This action too should have been a warning signal; it did trigger a Soviet reassurance that Moscow had no need for an offensive base in Cuba. However, the Soviets did not find these warnings weighty enough to reverse their plans for installation.

V

Another major barrier to an objective U.S. evaluation of the data was our own estimate of Soviet behavior. The Stennis Report isolated as one "substantial" error in evaluation "the predisposition of the intelligence community to the philosophical conviction that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba."⁹

⁹ Op. cit., p. 3.

Khrushchev had never put medium- or long-range missiles in any satellite country and therefore, it was reasoned, he certainly would not put them on an island 9,000 miles away from the Soviet Union, and only 90 miles away from the United States, when this was bound to provoke a sharp American reaction.

In considering this estimate of Soviet behavior, let us remember that the intelligence community was not alone. It had plenty of support from Soviet experts, inside and outside the Government. At any rate, no articulate expert now claims the role of Cassandra. Once a predisposition about the opponent's behavior becomes settled, it is very hard to shake. In this case, it was reinforced not only by expert authority but also by the knowledge both conscious and unconscious that the White House had set down a policy for relaxation of tension with the East. This policy background was much more subtle in its influence than documents or diplomatic experience. For when an official policy or hypothesis is laid down, it tends to obscure alternative hypotheses, and to lead to overemphasis of the data that support it, particularly in a situation of increasing tension, when it is important not to "rock the boat."

In the case of Pearl Harbor, there was a concentration on Atlantic and European affairs, which led to a kind of neglect of, or tendency to ignore, Far Eastern signals, and to a policy of staving off the outbreak of a Pacific war as long as possible. In the last months especially, this tendency was combined with a desire to avoid incidents. The wording of the final warning messages to the Army and Navy reflected this concern:

If hostilities cannot repeat not be avoided the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not repeat not be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense. Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary but these measures should be carried out so as not repeat not to alarm civil population or disclose intent . . . Undertake no offensive action until Japan has committed an overt act.¹⁰

These directives have been frequently characterized as "do-don't."

¹⁰ U.S., Congress, Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, Part 14, p. 1407.

Another attempt to avoid incidents was the Navy order of October 17 to re-route all trans-Pacific shipping to and from the Far East through the Torres Straits (between New Guinea and Australia), thus clearing the sea lanes to the north and northwest of the Hawaiian Islands. This order followed a warning of possible hostile action by Japan against U.S. merchant shipping. We avoided any incidents in these sea lanes, and at the same time we cut off the possibility of visual observation of the Japanese task force bound for Pearl Harbor.

In the autumn of 1962, pursuing a policy of reducing tension, the Kennedy Administration made very little allowance for deception in Soviet statements, for false reassurances that would quiet justifiable American fears. On September 2, TASS published a joint communique on Soviet military aid to Cuba, referring to the August 27 visit to Moscow of Che Guevara and Emilio Aragones. The Soviet Government announced assistance in metallurgical work and the sending of technical specialists in agriculture to Cuba. They added that

views were also exchanged in connection with threats of aggressive imperialist quarters with regard to Cuba. In view of these threats the government of the Cuban Republic addressed the Soviet government with a request for help by delivering armaments and sending technical specialists for training Cuban servicemen.

The Soviet government tentatively considered this request of the government of Cuba. An agreement was reached on this question. As long as the above-mentioned quarters continue threatening Cuba, the Cuban Republic has every justification for taking necessary measures to insure its security and safeguard its sovereignty and independence, while all Cuba's true friends have every right to respond to this legitimate request.¹¹

This was reassuring in a negative understated way: it limited military aid to vague "armaments" and "technical specialists." On September 11, in response to the President's request to call up reserves, a higher-keyed, if not hysterical, pronouncement was issued by TASS. This started with an attack on "bellicose-minded reactionary elements" and "the provocations the United States Government is now staging, provocations which might plunge the world into disaster of a universal world war with the use of thermonuclear weapons." In the U.S. Congress and in the American press, the Soviet Government claimed, an unbridled propaganda campaign

¹¹ The New York Times, September 3, 1962.

CPYRGHT

was calling for an attack on Cuba and on Soviet ships "carrying the necessary commodities and food to the Cuban people." "Little heroic Cuba" was pictured as at the mercy of American imperialists, who were alarmed by the failure of their economic blockade and calling for measures to strangle her. Particularly serious was the President's action in asking Congress' permission to call up 150,000 reservists. The statement then embarked on a series of jeers at the ridiculous fears of the American imperialists. The peace-loving Soviet Union was sending agronomists, machine-operators, tractor-drivers and livestock experts to Cuba to share their experience and knowledge and to help the Cubans master Soviet farm machinery.

What could have alarmed the American leaders? What is the reason for this Devil's Sabbath? . . . Gentlemen, you are evidently so frightened you're afraid of your own shadow . . . It seems to you some hordes are moving to Cuba when potatoes or oil, tractors, harvesters, combines, and other farming industrial machinery are carried to Cuba to maintain the Cuban economy. We can say to these people that these are our ships and that what we carry in them is no business of theirs . . . We can say, quoting a popular saying: "Don't butt your noses where you oughtn't." But we do not hide from the world public that we really are supplying Cuba with industrial equipment and goods which are helping to strengthen her economy.¹²

A bit farther on, having had its fun, TASS recalled that "a certain amount of armaments is also being shipped from the Soviet Union to Cuba" and that Soviet military specialists had also been requested by the Government of Cuba. However, the number of Soviet military specialists sent to Cuba "can in no way be compared to the number of workers in agriculture and industry sent there. The armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes and the President of the United States and the American military just [like] the military of any country know what means of defense are." The statement went on to imply that any threat to the United States was a figment of the American imagination. The major reassurance then followed:

The Government of the Soviet Union also authorized TASS to state that there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons for the repulsion of aggression, for a retaliatory blow, to any other country, for instance Cuba. Our nuclear weapons are so powerful in their explosive force and the Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads,

12

Text of Soviet statement, The New York Times, September 12, 1962.

that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union. We have said and we do repeat that if war is unleashed, if the aggressor makes an attack on one state or another and this state asks for assistance, the Soviet Union has the possibility from its own territory to render assistance to any peace-loving state and not only to Cuba. And let no one doubt that the Soviet Union will render such assistance just as it was ready in 1956 to render military assistance to Egypt at the time of the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression in the Suez Canal region.

This sort of reassurance had also been privately delivered to the President, and the misuse of the private channel apparently shocked President Kennedy as much as the creation of the strategic base in Cuba.

President Kennedy and his staff had believed the Soviet reassurances. Their reaction to what they regarded as deception was one of genuine outrage, for one of the President's basic tenets had been that a state of mutual trust between the great powers was an important part of the problem of relaxing tension. And there is a considerable body of literature which goes farther and isolates the attitude of mutual suspicion itself as the central danger today in international relations.

It is a permanent problem of diplomacy to know where to draw the line in extending trust to unfriendly states. A certain amount of healthy suspicion of the opponent's public statements is in order. The President deliberately tested the willingness of Gromyko to lie, after the President knew the truth, but before the Russians knew that he knew. The trap set by the President aroused the indignation of some of those very Americans who urge mutual trust. But the President of the United States would be simple indeed if he did not build trust cautiously on the basis of many such probings. The Russian performance in the fall and winter of 1962 made it perfectly clear that we cannot take at face value Russian statements -- even those made only to the top American leadership in privacy and without those constraints that might be imposed by having the Chinese or other Communist powers or the non-aligned or our own allies listening.

In periods of high tension it is commonly accepted that deception will be an enemy tactic. Before the Pearl Harbor attack Japanese deception was very refined and ingenious. It involved, among other things, giving shore leave to large numbers of Japanese sailors, reinforcing garrisons on the northern border of Manchuria to give an impression of a thrust to the north, issuing false war plans to Japanese commanders and substituting true ones only days before the attack, and on the diplomatic side continuing the appearance of negotiation. For deception is not confined to statements, but must also be translated into actions.

It is important for the enemy's security that he keep his signals quiet. On the Soviet side this meant that all movement on the island of Cuba

CPYRGHT

must take place at night. The Cubans were excluded from the docks and from many of the missile construction areas. Troops were kept below decks, and unloaded equipment was camouflaged or hidden under the trees. On our own side, in the period before October 22, tight security was important to preserve the initiative. And this tight security was maintained through the next few weeks. The members of the group close to the President, known as the Executive Committee or EXCOM, were directly supervising decisions normally left to lower command levels and were doing paper work normally handled by their staffs. This sort of procedure is fine for a couple of weeks, but it means the neglect of other areas of government and, in particular, other areas of foreign policy.¹³ Richard Neustadt, a keen observer, reminds us that the Sino-Indian conflict was in progress at the same time, and offers a "lay impression" that "at least one side effect of Cuba" was to tighten the time and narrow the frame of reference of the decision-- then in the making -- on Skybolt.¹⁴ Under conditions of tight security, there is also a danger that we may keep signals not only from the enemy but also from ourselves. There are a good many who feel that careful study by a wider range of experts might have been useful at the time and would be useful now, particularly with regard to the Kennedy-Khrushchev communications. These, like MAGIC, were very closely held during the crisis and had to be read and interpreted swiftly at the time.

Another set of signs we may have misread or missed were those appearing in official Cuban statements. Castro is so verbose and temperamental that we tend not to listen carefully to his speeches. And his controlled press is so dull that we are equally careless about that. In addition, the policy of embargo and explicit isolation of the island tends to carry over in a curious way to ignoring the voice of Cuban officialdom.

It is interesting now to review the Cuban press of 1962 for clues we might have picked up. After Raul Castro's July visit to Moscow, the warmth of the references to the Soviet Union increased noticeably. Thanks and praise became the order of the day. On September 11, the day of the falsely reassuring TASS statement, the Cuban newspaper Revolucion underlined the threat of thermonuclear war invoked by TASS. The front page was printed

¹³ According to Secretary Rusk, "Senior officers did their own typing; some of my own basic papers were done in my own handwriting, in order to limit the possibility of further spread" C.B.S. Reports, televised interview of Secretary Rusk by David Schoenbrun, November 28, 1962.

¹⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations of the Committee on Government Operations, Administration of National Security, 88th Congress, 1st Session, 1963, Part I, p. 97, testimony of March 25, 1963.

with a single white headline on a black background, and it said: "Rockets Over the United States if Cuba is Invaded." Forcing the Soviet Union's hand in this way had been Cuban policy for some time, so that it was natural for our experts to take this as another instance of Cuban wishful thinking.

Finally, in intelligence work the role of chance, accident and bad luck is always with us. It was bad luck that September-October is the hurricane season in the Caribbean, so that some reconnaissance photography was unclear and certain flights were canceled. It was bad luck that the Red Chinese shot down a U-2 on September 9. In 1941 it was bad luck that we had cut all traffic on the Northwest Passage to Russia, and thereby made visual observation of the Pearl Harbor task force impossible. It was bad luck that there was a radio blackout in the Hawaiian Islands on the morning of December 7, and that Colonel French of the Communications Room then decided to use commercial wire instead of recommending the scrambler telephone for the last alert message.

VI

To sum up then, in both the Pearl Harbor and Cuban crises there was lots of information. But in both cases, regardless of what the Monday morning quarterbacks have to say, the data were ambiguous and incomplete. There was never a single, definitive signal that said, "Get ready, get set, go!" but rather a number of signals which, when put together, tended to crystallize suspicion. The true signals were always embedded in the noise or irrelevance of false ones. Some of this noise was created deliberately by our adversaries, some by chance and some we made ourselves. In addition, our adversary was interested in suppressing the signs of his intent and did what he could to keep his movements quiet. In both cases the element of time also played against us. There were delays between the time information came in, was checked for accuracy, evaluated for its meaning, and made the basis for appropriate action. Many of these delays were only prudent, given the ambiguities and risks of response.

The interpretation of data depends on a lot of things, including our estimate of the adversary and of his willingness to take risks. To make our lives more complicated, this depends on what he thinks the risks are, which in turn depends on his interpretation of us. We underestimated the risks that the Japanese were willing to take in 1941, and the risks that Khrushchev was willing to take in the summer and fall of 1962. Both the Japanese and the Russians, in turn, underestimated our ultimate willingness to respond.

CPYRGHT

It is important to understand that the difficulties described are intrinsic. By focusing on misestimated capabilities, disposition and intentions, we obscure the fact that, without a very large and complex body of assumptions and estimates, the data collected would not speak to us at all. If there were no technological constraints whatsoever -- if, for example, a large missile installation could be put in place in an instant -- no reconnaissance, no matter how frequent, could provide assurance that we would not at any moment face a massive new adversary. The complex inferences involved in the act of interpreting photographs are made possible only by a large body of assumptions of varying degrees of uncertainty, ranging from principles of optics and Euclidean geometry through technological, economic and political judgments. The inferences from the interpretations themselves in turn are based on an even wider range of uncertain beliefs. But just because a very large body of partially confirmed beliefs and guesses is involved in interpreting a reconnaissance photograph or the observations of a Cuban refugee or intelligence agent, it is possible to interpret the photograph or observations in many differing ways. Our beliefs, as Willard Van Orman Quine has put it, are "underdetermined" by our experience, and they do not face experience separately, statement by statement, but always in mass, as a collection. We have a good deal of freedom as to what statements to adjust in the light of any new and seemingly disturbing report.

An observation or its report does not seize us, then, and force any specific interpretation. This relatively free situation of hypotheses in intelligence is no different in kind from that of hypotheses in the more exact sciences such as physics. A more naive empiricism once suggested that statements in physics could be refuted definitively by observation, by the result of a crucial experiment. But a great many physicists and students of the logic of science, at least since Pierre Duhem, have shown that even the interpretation of the simplest experiment depends implicitly on comprehensive theories about the measuring instruments and a great deal else. It is always possible therefore to "save" a theory or hypothesis by altering some other one of the large set of our beliefs that connects it with any given observation.

If this is true in the more exact sciences it is most obviously true for the role of observations and their interpretation in such spheres of practical activity as the operation of an intelligence agency, and the inferences and decisions of an executive. Here the assumptions that shape interpretation are likely to be more multifarious and also less explicit and therefore often less tentatively held. This puts it midly. Some of the relevant assumptions may be held passionately. They are likely to include wishful or self-flattering beliefs, items of national pride or claims at issue in partisan debate. In the case of Japan, some of the critical assumptions concerned technology -- the range, speed and manoeuvrability of the Zero plane, the supposed inability of the

Japanese to do any better than the Americans in launching torpedoes in shallow water. In the case of Cuba again some critical assumptions were technological; for example, the minimum time required to put into place and make operational a medium-range ballistic missile. Others concerned the politics and character of the Soviet, Cuban and American leadership and their estimates of each other's willingness to take a chance. Our expectations and prior hypotheses guide our observations and affect their interpretation. It is this prior frame of mind, now changed, that we forget most easily in retrospect. And it is this above all that makes every past surprise nearly unintelligible -- and inexplicable except perhaps as criminal folly or conspiracy.

The genuine analogies between Pearl Harbor and Cuba should not obscure the important differences. A study of the Pearl Harbor case makes clear that the problem of getting warning of an impending nuclear raid today is much harder than the problem of detecting the Japanese attack some 20 years ago. It is against this increased difficulty that we must balance improvements in intelligence techniques and organization. But the missile crisis illustrates something else, namely that there are other acts very much short of nuclear war of which we want to be apprised, and here our improved techniques and organization can put us ahead of the game. Action was taken during the missile crisis and taken in time to forestall Soviet plans. For while we can never ensure the complete elimination of ambiguity in the signals that come our way, we can energetically take action to reduce their ambiguity, by acquiring information as we did with the U-2. And we can tailor our response to the uncertainties and dangers that remain.

In the Cuban missile crisis action could be taken on ambiguous warning because the action was sliced very thin. After reconnaissance reduced the ambiguity, the response chosen kept to a minimum the actual contact with Russian forces, but a minimum compatible with assuring Khrushchev that we meant business: quarantine, the threat of boarding, the actual boarding of one Lebanese vessel chartered to the Soviet Union. Further, it was a response planned in great detail as the first in a sequence of graded actions that ranged from a build-up of U.S. Army, Marine and Tactical Air Forces in Florida and our southeastern bases to a world-wide alert of the Strategic Air Command. We had been partially prepared for such sequences of action short of nuclear war by the Berlin contingency planning, and this put us in a position to use the warning we had accumulated. If we had had to choose only among much more drastic actions, our hesitation would have been greater.

The problem of warning, then, is inseparable from the problem of decision. We cannot guarantee foresight. But we can improve the chance of acting on signals in time to avert or moderate a disaster. We can do this by a more thorough and sophisticated analysis of observers' reports, by making more explicit and tentative the framework of assumptions into which we must fit

CPYRGHT

any new observations, and by refining, subdividing and making more selective the range of responses we prepare, so that our response may fit the ambiguities of our information and minimize the risks both of error and of inaction. Since the future doubtless holds many shocks and attempts at surprise, it is comforting to know that we do learn from one crisis to the next.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL INTELLIGENCE

DIRECTIVE NO. 1¹

BASIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Revised 4 March 1964)

The intelligence effort of the United States is a national responsibility, and must be so organized and managed as to exploit to the maximum the available resources of the Government and to satisfy the intelligence requirements of the National Security Council and of the departments and agencies of the Government. For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security and pursuant to the provisions of Section 102 of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, the National Security Council hereby authorizes and directs that:

1. Over-all Coordination

The Director of Central Intelligence shall coordinate the foreign intelligence activities of the United States in accordance with existing law and applicable National Security Council directives. Such coordination shall include both special and other forms of intelligence which together constitute the foreign intelligence activities of the United States.

¹ This Directive supersedes NSCID No. 1, dated 18 January 1961.

2. The United States Intelligence Board (USIB)

a. To maintain the relationship necessary for a fully coordinated intelligence community,² and to provide for a more effective integration of and guidance to the national intelligence effort, a United States Intelligence Board (USIB) is hereby established under the directives of the National Security Council and under the chairmanship of the Director of Central Intelligence. The Board shall advise and assist the Director of Central Intelligence as he may require in the discharge of his statutory responsibilities and pursuant to paragraph 1 above. Subject to other established responsibilities under existing law and to the provisions of National Security Council directives, the Board shall also:

- (1) Establish policies and develop programs for the guidance of all departments and agencies concerned.
- (2) Establish appropriate intelligence objectives, requirements and priorities.
- (3) Review and report to the National Security Council on the national foreign-intelligence effort as a whole.
- (4) Make recommendations on foreign-intelligence matters to appropriate United States officials, including particularly recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on intelligence matters within the jurisdiction of the Director of the National Security Agency.
- (5) Develop and review security standards and practices as they relate to the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure.
- (6) Formulate, as appropriate, policies with respect to arrangements with foreign governments on intelligence matters.

² The intelligence community includes the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence components of the Departments of State, Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency, Army, Navy, and Air Force), National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Atomic Energy Commission. Other components of the departments and agencies of the Government are included to the extent of their agreed participation in regularly established interdepartmental intelligence activities.

b. The membership of the U.S. Intelligence Board shall consist of the following:

- (1) The Director of Central Intelligence, Chairman.
- (2) The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.
- (3) The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.
- (4) The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.
- (5) The Director, National Security Agency.
- (6) A representative of the Atomic Energy Commission.
- (7) A representative of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall invite the chief of any other department or agency having functions related to the national security to sit with the U.S. Intelligence Board whenever matters within the purview of his department or agency are to be discussed.

c. The Board shall determine its own procedures and shall establish subordinate committees and working groups, as appropriate. It shall be provided with a Secretariat staff, which shall be under the direction of an Executive Secretary appointed by the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with the members of the Board.

d. The U.S. Intelligence Board shall reach its decisions by agreement. When the Chairman determines that a given position on a matter under consideration represents the consensus of the Board it shall be considered as agreed unless a dissenting member requests that the issue be referred to the National Security Council. Upon such request, the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall refer the matter, together with the dissenting brief, to the National Security Council for decision.

Provided: That such appeals to the National Security Council by the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency or the Director, National Security Agency, shall be taken only after review by the Secretary of Defense.

Whenever matters of concern to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and/or the Atomic Energy Commission are referred to the National Security Council, the Attorney General and/or the Chairman of the

Atomic Energy Commission respectively, shall sit with the Council. The Board may recommend through its Chairman that a sensitive intelligence matter requiring the attention of higher authority be dealt with by the Council in a restricted meeting, including only those officials who have substantive interest in the matter, or directly by the President.

e. Decisions and recommendations of the Board shall, as appropriate, be transmitted by the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, to the departments or agencies concerned, or to the National Security Council when higher approval is required, or for information.

f. In making recommendations to the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security, the Director of Central Intelligence, as Chairman, shall transmit therewith a statement indicating the concurrence or non-concurring views of those members of the U.S. Intelligence Board concerned. Such recommendations when approved by the National Security Council shall, as appropriate, be issued as National Security Council Intelligence Directives or as other Council directives and, as applicable, shall be promulgated and implemented by the departments and agencies of the Government.

g. Decisions of the Board arrived at under the authority and procedures of this paragraph shall be binding, as applicable, on all departments and agencies of the Government.

3. The Director of Central Intelligence

a. The Director of Central Intelligence shall act for the National Security Council to provide for detailed implementation of National Security Council Intelligence Directives by issuing with the concurrence of the U.S. Intelligence Board such supplementary Director of Central Intelligence Directives as may be required (see par. 2d above). Such directives shall, as applicable, be promulgated and implemented within the normal command channels of the departments and agencies concerned.

b. Director of Central Intelligence Directives to be issued in accordance with the provisions of sub-paragraph a above shall include:

(1) General guidance and the establishment of specific priorities for the production of national and other intelligence and for collection and other activities in support thereof, including: (a) establishment of comprehensive National Intelligence Objectives generally applicable to foreign countries and areas; (b) identification from time to time, and on a current basis of Priority

National Intelligence Objectives with reference to specific countries and subjects; and (c) issuance of such comprehensive and priority objectives, for general intelligence guidance, and their formal transmission to the National Security Council.

(2) Establishment of policy, procedures and practices for the maintenance, by the individual components of the intelligence community, of a continuing interchange of intelligence, intelligence information, and other information with utility for intelligence purposes.

(3) Establishment of policy, procedures and practices for the production or procurement, by the individual components of the intelligence community within the limits of their capabilities, of such intelligence, intelligence information and other information with utility for intelligence purposes relating to the national security, as may be requested by one of the departments or agencies.

c. The Director of Central Intelligence, or representatives designated by him, in consultation with the head of the intelligence or other appropriate component of the department or agency concerned, shall make such surveys of departmental intelligence activities of the various departments and agencies as he may deem necessary in connection with his duty to advise the National Security Council and to coordinate the intelligence effort of the United States.

4. National Intelligence

a. National intelligence is that intelligence which is required for the formulation of national security policy, concerns more than one department or agency, and transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency. The Director of Central Intelligence shall produce³ national intelligence with the support of the U.S. Intelligence Board. Intelligence so produced shall have the concurrence, as appropriate, of the members of the U.S. Intelligence Board or shall carry a statement of any substantially differing opinion of such a member or of the Intelligence Chief of a Military Department.

³ By "produce" is meant "to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security" as provided in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, Section 102 (d) (3).

b. Departmental intelligence is that intelligence which any department or agency requires to execute its own mission.

c. Interdepartmental intelligence is integrated departmental intelligence which is required by departments and agencies of the Government for the execution of their missions, but which transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency to produce. The subcommittee structure of the U.S. Intelligence Board may be utilized for the production and dissemination of interdepartmental intelligence.

d. The Director of Central Intelligence shall disseminate national intelligence to the President, members of the National Security Council, as appropriate, members of the U.S. Intelligence Board and, subject to existing statutes, to such other components of the Government as the National Security Council may from time to time designate or the U.S. Intelligence Board may recommend. He is further authorized to disseminate national intelligence and interdepartmental intelligence produced within the U.S. Intelligence Board structure on a strictly controlled basis to foreign governments and international bodies upon his determination, with the concurrence of the U.S. Intelligence Board, that such action would substantially promote the security of the United States: Provided, That such dissemination is consistent with existing statutes and Presidential policy including that reflected in international agreements; and provided further that any disclosure of FBI intelligence information shall be cleared with that agency prior to dissemination. Departmental intelligence and interdepartmental intelligence produced outside the U.S. Intelligence Board subcommittee structure may be disseminated in accordance with existing statutes and Presidential policy including that reflected in international agreements.

e. Whenever any member of the U.S. Intelligence Board obtains information which indicates an impending crisis situation which affects the security of the United States to such an extent that immediate action or decision by the President or the National Security Council may be required, he shall immediately transmit the information to the Director of Central Intelligence and the other members of the U.S. Intelligence Board as well as to the National Indications Center and to other officials or agencies as may be indicated by the circumstances. The Director of Central Intelligence shall, in consultation with the U.S. Intelligence Board, immediately prepare and disseminate as appropriate the national intelligence estimate of the situation, in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

- 162 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

5. Protection of Intelligence and of Intelligence Sources and Methods

The Director of Central Intelligence, with the assistance and support of the members of the U.S. Intelligence Board, shall ensure the development of policies and procedures for the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. Each department and agency, however, shall remain responsible for the protection of intelligence and of intelligence sources and methods within its own organization. Each shall also establish appropriate internal policies and procedures to prevent the unauthorized disclosure from within that agency of intelligence information or activity. The Director of Central Intelligence shall call upon the departments and agencies as appropriate, to investigate within their departments and agency any unauthorized disclosure of intelligence or of intelligence sources or methods. A report of these investigations, including corrective measures taken or recommended within the departments and agencies involved, shall be transmitted to the Director of Central Intelligence for review and such further action as may be appropriate, including reports to the National Security Council or the President.

6. Community Responsibilities

a. In implementation of, and in conformity with, approved National Security Council policy, the Director of Central Intelligence in consultation with and supported by the other members of the U.S. Intelligence Board and by other appropriate offices, shall:

(1) Call upon the other departments and agencies as appropriate to ensure that on intelligence matters affecting the national security the intelligence community is supported by the full knowledge and technical talent available in or to the Government;

(2) Ensure that the pertinence, extent and quality of the available foreign intelligence and intelligence information relating to the national security is continually reviewed as a basis for improving the quality of intelligence and the correction of deficiencies;

(3) Take appropriate measures to facilitate the coordinated development of compatible referencing systems within the departments and agencies engaged in foreign intelligence activities. Central reference facilities as a service of common concern shall be provided by the Central Intelligence Agency and/or other departments and agencies, as appropriate; and

(4) Make arrangements with the departments and agencies for the assignment to, or exchange with, the Central Intelligence Agency of such experienced and qualified personnel as may be of

S-E-C-R-E-T

advantage for advisory, operational, or other purposes. In order to facilitate the performance of their respective intelligence missions, the departments and agencies concerned shall, by agreement, provide each other with such mutual assistance as may be within their capabilities and as may be required in the interests of the intelligence community for reasons of economy, efficiency, or operational necessity. In this connection primary departmental interests shall be recognized and shall receive mutual cooperation and support.

b. In so far as practicable, in the fulfillment of their respective responsibilities for the production of intelligence, the several departments and agencies shall not duplicate the intelligence activities and research of other departments and agencies and shall make full use of existing capabilities of the other elements of the intelligence community.

c. The departments and agencies of the Government shall establish appropriate policies and procedures to control and limit undesirable publicity relating to intelligence activities.

- 164 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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APPENDIX C

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTIVE NO. 1/1¹

PRODUCTION OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

(Effective 5 August 1959)

Pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4, NSCID No. 1, and in order to facilitate department participation in the production of national intelligence estimates, the following operating procedures are established:

1. Programming

Periodically, but not less than quarterly, the Board of National Estimates, Central Intelligence Agency, will present to the United States Intelligence Board (Intelligence Board) for approval a program of National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's and SNIE's) for production during the following six months. In preparing this program, the Board of National Estimates will consult with the NSC Planning Board and appropriate committees of the Intelligence Board, and will coordinate with the Intelligence Board agencies.

2. Initiation

Requests for estimates other than those programmed will be transmitted to the Intelligence Board via the Board of National Estimates. This Board will take such action as is indicated by the circumstances prior to transmitting the request to the Intelligence Board for action; e.g., comment, initiate immediate action subject to subsequent Intelligence Board ratification, or attach draft terms of reference to its recommendation that the estimate be approved for production.

¹ This Directive supersedes DCID No. 1/1, effective 21 April 1958, which in turn had superseded DCID No. 3/5, of 1 September 1953.

3. Normal Preparation

Estimates will normally be prepared in four stages:

a. Terms of Reference and Contributions -- The Board of National Estimates, after consultation with the Intelligence Board agencies, will circulate terms of reference indicating the scope of the estimate and the intelligence material needed. The Agencies, or an Intelligence Board Subcommittee or other appropriate group, will then prepare contributions and submit them to the Board of National Estimates.

b. Drafting and Board of National Estimates Consideration -- After considering the contributions, and such consultation with any contributing agency which may be appropriate, the Board of National Estimates will prepare a draft.

c. Consideration by Representatives of the Intelligence Board Agencies -- Representatives of the Intelligence Board agencies will meet with the Board of National Estimates to review, comment on, and revise the draft as necessary.

d. Intelligence Board Consideration -- The final draft will then be submitted to the Intelligence Board for approval.

4. Preparation under Exceptional Circumstances

Any of the steps listed in 3a, b, and c above may be omitted under exceptional or unusually urgent circumstances.

5. Dissents

Any agency may dissent to any feature of an estimate. Such dissents identify the dissenter and will state the dissenter's position on the matter.

6. Publication and Dissemination

Finished estimates will be published by CIA and disseminated by the DCI according to established procedures. Published estimates will carry a note indicating the extent of coordination within the intelligence community.

ALLEN W. DULLES

Director of Central Intelligence

- 171 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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S-E-C-R-E-T/NOFORN

S-E-C-R-E-T/NOFORN